Mr. Bogue

X

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

SOME PASSAGES OF A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

LAY-PREACHING INDEFENSIBLE

ON SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLES,

BY Mr. JOHN ROBERTSON,

ASSISTANT MINISTER, CAMBUSLANG.

BY

GREVILLE EWING,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, TABERNACLE,

GLASGOW.

"Suffer me that I may ſpeak, and after that I have ſpoken, mock on."—Job.

"Why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſi-"dereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?"—Jesus.

"I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed."—Paul.

GLASGOW,

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ANIMADVERSIONS, &c.

IT is not the object of theſe papers to vindicate what is called Lay-Preaching. The queſtion, Who have a right to preach the Goſpel, when fairly ſtated, and ſeriouſly conſidered, may be ſafely left to the common ſenſe of every intelligent reader of the Word of God. Extravagant ſuppoſitions, however qualified by peradventures, gilded with epithets of high probability, and rendered dazzling by the pageantry of affected literature, will make little impreſſion on the mind of him whoſe faith is yielded only to the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Robertſon profeſſes to have no inclination for entering into farther controverſy; nor does his performance, conſidered as a piece of reaſoning, appear to me to make it in the leaſt neceſſary, that any one ſhould call upon him to take the trouble.* Granting however that the caſe were otherwiſe, it is poſſible for a Diſputant ſo to behave, as to render it diſhonourable for his opponents to anſwer his challenge.*

How far Mr. R.'s behaviour, as a diſputant, has been of this deſcription, a few quotations from his recent publication will abundantly ſhew.

* Such as wiſh to ſee what may be ſaid further in favour of Lay-Preaching may conſult Mr. Rowland Hill's Anſwer to Dr. Jamieſon; or if modern writers are all to be ſuſpected, let them have recourſe to the writings of Mr. John Glas.

"When the ſubject of Lay-Preaching began of late to "be diſcuſſed, many believed it to be a temporary breach "of order, with the view of attaining ends which ſeemed "important. This they more naturally believed, becauſe "that doctrine was known to be patronized by a Gentle-"man, who then *officially* acted under a ſolemn engage-"ment to maintain the Diſcipline of the Church of Scot-"land; and becauſe they did not in charity think, that he "would have attempted to undermine any radical princi-"ple in the conſtitution of that Church, while he remain-"ed in her connection, or till he had judicially withdrawn "his ſubſcription from her Formula. Upon a cloſer re-"view, however, of the ſentiments which that profeſſed "Preſbyterian then publiſhed, they will be found to ter-"minate, not in a temporary dereliction of order, but in "the adoption of a ſyſtem entirely different. The doc-"trine there held forth plainly is, that *any* man thinking "himſelf qualified to inſtruct others, may, without con-"ſulting the Church of which he profeſſes himſelf a "member, and in whoſe communion he ſeems willing to "remain, take upon him the office of an Evangeliſt, or "Itinerant Preacher of the Word."

This paſſage, unaccompanied as it is with ſo much as the pretext of evidence, I conceive to be replete with ſlanderous inſinuation. The ſofteſt part of it implies a charge, of breaking, at leaſt for a time, the beautiful order of the church of Chriſt. This temporary breach of order is of courſe a known and a wilful one, becauſe it is ſuppoſed to have been attempted with the view of attaining certain ends. What theſe ends are, though ſtated to be important, he does not ſay. Allowing them however to be of the moſt excellent kind, it is in effect declared, that as ſoon as Lay-Preaching began to be diſcuſſed, it was the belief of many that the advocates for the practice,

were saying in their hearts, "Let us do evil that good "may come." Does it not obviously follow, "their "damnation is just?" and yet Mr. R. immediately after having professed it to be his own opinion, that the motives of many of them were pure*, accounts for the awful opinion entertained of them by many others as arising from "a natural belief," and even ascribes it to "a "charitable thought."

This natural belief was rendered, it seems, "more "natural," because the doctrine of Lay-Preaching was known to be patronized by a Gentleman, who then *officially* acted under a solemn engagement to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scotland. That Gentleman has yet to learn, the inconsistency between the Discipline of the Church of Scotland, and the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, as pleaded for by those advocates whom he patronized. They have always contended, that their doctrine interfered not with the discipline of any church. Let it be supposed, (though it is not granted) that this notion should turn out to be erroneous; it is nevertheless manifest that, while a man entertains it, he may with perfect integrity both patronize and avow the doctrine in question, even while he *officially* acts under a solemn engagement to maintain the discipline of the church to which he then belongs. In the case before us, Mr. R. has presumed to insinuate the very reverse. Not content with mentioning the official situation, and the solemn engagements of the person alluded to, as inconsistent with his patronage of Lay-Preaching, he adds, "they did not "in charity think, that he would have attempted to un-"dermine any radical principle in the constitution of that "Church, while he remained in her connection, or till "he had judicially withdrawn his subscription from her

* Page 5.

"Formula." Theſe words can have no meaning, unleſs they be underſtood as a judgment of the heart. Mr. R.'s charitable friends are evidently repreſented as miſled by their charity, which neceſſarily implies the following aſſertions: that the object of their charity was *conſcious*, that to renounce the hereſy of Lay-Preaching was a radical principle in the conſtitution of the Church of Scotland; that with this *conviction in his boſom* he remained for a time in her connection, and did not judicially withdraw his ſubſcription from her formula, even while he thought proper to embrace that hereſy; that in addition to the *conſciouſneſs* of this inconſiſtency, he formed the *deſign* of overthrowing a radical principle in the conſtitution of his Church; that not daring to make the attack openly, he mingled treachery with rebellion, and *deviſed* a ſcheme for *undermining* it; and that this daſtardly and dark *conſpiracy*, at the expence of *perjury* itſelf, he actually attempted to put in execution. Muſt we aſcribe to Mr. R. the divine perfection of Omniſcience? Yet a knowledge of the heart, at leaſt of one individual, is the only conceivable ſuppoſition which will juſtify his dread inſinuations.

I HAVE not forgotten, that a man's deſigns may be detected by his conduct. In the caſe before us, let the facts be produced. Greville Ewing was once an ordained Miniſter in the Church of Scotland. While in that ſituation, he was for ſome time Editor of The Miſſionary Magazine, a periodical monthly publication, intended as a Repoſitory of Diſcuſſion and Intelligence reſpecting the progreſs of the Goſpel throughout the World. In theſe plain terms, the deſign of the work was avowed on its title page, and to this day ſtands uncondemned even by its bittereſt enemies. The origin, as well as the nature of the undertaking, had been previouſly explained to the public in a proſpectus; and the defects of the execution, of which the

Editor was conſcious, were frankly confeſſed in the prefaces to the ſucceſſive volumes. In the courſe of the work, a correſpondent propoſed to inſtitute the Inquiry, "Who have a right to preach the Goſpel?" This queſtion appeared to the Editor perfectly ſuitable, for a "Repoſitory of *diſcuſſion* reſpecting the progreſs of the "Goſpel throughout the world;" more eſpecially as what is called Lay-Preaching was notoriouſly countenanced by ſome of the moſt celebrated and ſucceſsful Miſſionary Societies. He perceived moreover in his correſpondent's paper, every feature which he thought characteriſtic of upright intention, ſerious temper, candour, and modeſty, and deſire of information*. Theſe features will be found in every page that has appeared in the Miſſionary Magazine under that correſpondent's ſignature†; nor can want of candour be charged upon any of the writers, who followed him in that work, on the ſame ſide of the queſtion. In admitting ſuch papers on ſuch a ſubject, the Editor acted ſimply in the ſpirit of his original plan. Had he excluded performances on the other ſide, there might indeed have been ground of ſuſpicion and cenſure. So far, however, was this from being the caſe, that in the Miſſionary Magazine will be found, what Mr. R. has not once acknowledged, papers on the other ſide of that queſtion, both from Diſſenters and Churchmen, *Clergymen* and *Laymen*, at leaſt as able and as convincing, as any thing that has ſince been preſented to the public‡. When the diſcuſſion had proceeded as far as the Editor thought due to its merits, he ſignified his wiſh that it ſhould terminate§, which it accordingly did.—Theſe are the facts, reſpecting the patronage of the diſcuſſion of Lay-Preaching by a Gentleman, who then *officially* acted under a

* Miſſ. Mag. vol. II. p. 317. † Vol. II. p. 408.
‡ Vol. II. p. 399, 431. Vol. III. p. 22. § Vol. III. p. 79. note.

ſolemn engagement to maintain the Diſcipline of the Church of Scotland. If they can be counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance, in ſubſtantiating the momentous charges of conſpiracy and perjury, let the accuſer, by all means that are honeſt, or by any means whatever, make the moſt of them he can.

But turn thee yet again, ſays Mr. R. and thou ſhalt ſee greater abominations. "Upon a cloſer review of the "ſentiments which that profeſſed Preſbyterian then pub-"liſhed, they will be found to terminate, not in a tem-"porary dereliction of order, but in the adoption of a "ſyſtem entirely different. The doctrine there held forth "plainly is, that *any* man thinking himſelf qualified to "inſtruct others, may, without conſulting the Church of "which he profeſſes himſelf a member, and in whoſe "communion he ſeems willing to remain, take upon him "the office of an Evangeliſt, or Itinerant Preacher of the "Word."—Here, abſurdity itſelf is not refuſed, if it may but ſerve the purpoſe of exciting prejudice. That the ſentiments in queſtion might be received as evidence that the profeſſed Preſbyterian who publiſhed them, was guilty of attempting *to undermine* Preſbytery, it was neceſſary to ſpeak of them as being *artfully concealed*. The doctrine which they teach, however, is *plainly held forth*. But that *plain exhibition* is not to be ſeen, until it be viewed, and reviewed, and *more cloſely* reviewed. After all theſe elaborate, and repeated ſurveys of an object, at once ſo artfully concealed, and ſo plainly held forth, it has at laſt been found poſſible to miſrepreſent it. Never was it for a moment ſuppoſed, far leſs hinted, by the moſt zealous advocates for Lay-Preaching, that *any* man might preach the Goſpel of Chriſt. Without real Chriſtianity, and a degree of ability for the ſervice, *no man whatever*, let his opinion of himſelf be ever ſo good, let him profeſs ad-

herence to any Church he pleaſes, *let him even conſult that Church, and obtain her higheſt ſanction*, can have the moſt diſtant title to preach the Goſpel. I would, theſe prerequiſites were more attended to, both by Lay, and by Clerical preachers; and wherever they are found, I ſhall rejoice in the Labourer, whether he be claſſed among the one, or the other. If *ſuch* a Labourer be not recogniſed by the Church to which he belongs, there may be indeed a fault ſomewhere, but a queſtion occurs, which has not yet been determined, whether ſhall we blame the Labourer, who, thruſt forth from obſcurity by the Lord of the harveſt, has burſt unhallowed fetters, or the Church, which is ignorant of the gifts and graces of her members, indifferent to them when they are known, and more ready to reſtrain than to encourage their exertion? If, on the other hand, any man go forth to preach, who has no Chriſtianity, or no gifts for the work; unleſs he be protected by clerical privilege, the flaw in his right will ſpeedily appear. Whatever indeed be the character under which a preacher preſents himſelf, he will ſoon be diſcovered by the infallible teſt of our Saviour's touch-ſtone. "Beware of falſe prophets, which come to you "in ſheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening "wolves. Ye ſhall know them by their fruits." Matt. vii. 15. 16.

Upon a cloſer review of the paragraph before us, there ſeems to be ſomething, which though not indeed *plainly held forth*, may nevertheleſs be intended to produce an effect. This Lay-Preaching patron, "then *officially* acted "under a ſolemn engagement to maintain the Diſcipline "of the Church of Scotland." It was not in charity thought, "that he would have attempted to undermine "any radical principle in the conſtitution of that Church, "*while* he remained in her connection, or *till* he had ju-

" dicially withdrawn his ſubſcription from her Formula." Are theſe phraſes contrived for the ſuggeſtion of injurious inference? They are certainly not unfit for anſwering the diſhonourable purpoſe. The Gentleman acted *officially*. This may mean ſimply that he acted as a Miniſter; but it will alſo ſuggeſt, eſpecially in its preſent connection, and with its typographical dreſs, that his having acted in that capacity is to be conſidered, rather as the oſtenſible attendance upon the neceſſary buſineſs of Office, than the hearty and conſcientious regard for its functions. Again, " he *then* acted" in this way. This alſo has the advantage of ſerving a double uſe. It may ſimply allude to the fact, that the Gentleman has left the Church of Scotland, or to the abſurd doctrine which ſeemed to be gravely maintained by certain Clergymen in laſt General Aſſembly, that if a man did once take upon him the vows of ordination, and afterwards leave the Church which had impoſed them, no pretext of conſcientious change of ſentiment could redeem him from the tremendous accuſation of perjury. Finally, from what, it is ſaid, was not thought he would do, *while* he remained in the connection of the Church of Scotland, or *till* he had withdrawn his ſubſcription from her formula; it ſeems to be taken for granted, not only, that he was found to be doing ſo before, but that *now* he is confeſſedly, or rather profeſſedly, attempting to undermine her conſtitution. If Mr. R. ſhould diſavow theſe inferences, I would allow it poſſible, that he never intended they ſhould be drawn; but ſince it cannot be doubted that his words ſuggeſt them, they muſt not paſs without remark.

When we appeal to God for our ſincerity in any ſolemn tranſaction, or for our faithfulneſs in the diſcharge of important duty, it becomes us to ſpeak with humility and awe; and to acknowledge that mixture of guilt, and

imperfection, which mars all the imaginations and efforts of man. Under a trembling ſenſe of the deceitfulneſs and deſperate wickedneſs of my heart, and with ſhame and confuſion of face upon reviewing my paſt life, eſpecially the more ſerious and impreſſive ſcenes of it; I come forward reluctantly to make a proteſtation, which neceſſity alone can ever juſtify, which neceſſity alone has been able to produce. I was not conſcious of inſincerity when I took upon me the vows of Preſbyterian ordination, or of deſigned tranſgreſſion, or neglect of duty while I acted officially as a Miniſter of the Church of Scotland. Upon a change of ſentiment I reſigned my ſituation; and until I learn the means of human immutability on the one hand, or the holineſs of official hypocriſy on the other, I will maintain the lawfulneſs and the duty of that which I did, my vows of ordination notwithſtanding. The change I have ſpoken of was a gradual event. Had it been inſtantaneous or ſudden, it might well have been imputed to raſhneſs and levity. While my ſcruples were growing, the ſtate of my mind might no doubt appear, both from my public diſcourſes, my public writings, and my private converſation. To have avoided this, would have deprived me of the aid of friendly advice, as well as have required a faculty of diſſimulation, which I pray to God I may never poſſeſs. But I can truly ſay, that to the hour of my reſignation I did not once, to my knowledge, violate a ſingle obligation, to which I was ſubjected by the vows that were upon me.

The above declaration is of ſuch a nature, that for evidence of the greater part of it, the public can be preſented only with my bare word. An impartial public will readily allow, that a bare word is ſufficient for defence, while a bare word, or an oblique hint, is all that

can be uſed for accuſation. Nor will internal evidence be found wanting, in the ſimple, unlaboured narrative of truth. But if indeed my behaviour muſt be called ſo criminal, and my reſignation itſelf a very act of perjury, how came it to paſs, that the Preſbytery of Edinburgh were ſo pacific and harmonious in allowing me to eſcape their reprobation? I ſimply informed them that I deemed it my duty to withdraw, and reſpectfully aſked them to accept my reſignation. I did not come forward with a Manifeſto of defiance: as little did I deprecate their inquiries, or their vengeance. My reſignation however was accepted, apparently as a matter of courſe; for aught I know, without heſitation, and without a ſingle diſſenting voice. Here there is ſurely ſomething at leaſt like a negative teſtimony in my favour. I had no quarrel with the Preſbytery, and the Preſbytery had no quarrel with me. What a contraſt is there between this fact, and the hoſtility that has been ſince ſo ſtrongly manifeſted by other individuals, and other courts of the ſame Church! Was I better known by Mr. R. at Cambuſlang, or any of my accuſers before him, than by the aggregate body of that radical court under whoſe immediate inſpection I then lived? Will Mr. R. ſay, that the Preſbytery of Edinburgh were partial to Lay-preaching, or to the crime of patroniſing it? Were thoſe *regular judges* ſo deficient in their duty, that he muſt riſe up from afar, in all the innovating and reſtleſs ſpirit of the age, *ſelf authoriſed*, and *merely becauſe he thought himſelf qualified for the buſineſs*, to aſſume their juriſdiction, to reviſe their proceedings, to correct their errors, and to pronounce a merited, but neglected deciſion? Or will he force upon us the harſh concluſion, either that they ſo deſpiſed a weak brother, of whom they had charge, as to think him unworthy their notice; or conſidered it the policy of prudence to let him quietly go, that the paſtoral admonition which was me-

ditated, in a higher judicatory, together with all the invectives which ſhould there be pronounced, might be fulminated againſt him, without giving him a proper opportunity of defending himſelf, or of ſo much as demanding the production of that pretended evidence, which they knew would not bear to be publicly ſeen.

But whatever I was before, it ſeems to be taken for granted, that *now* I am confeſſedly attempting to undermine the Church of Scotland. Moſt certainly I avow myſelf a decided Diſſenter. If I did not, I ſhould be ſelf-condemned for my departure from a National Church, which, ſo far as I know, is as good as any inſtitution of the kind, in all the world. I am a Diſſenter, becauſe I think Chriſtianity ſuffers, when civil privileges are claimed by any denomination of Chriſtians, in their Church capacity: I am moreover a Diſſenter from the Church of Scotland, becauſe I am not convinced of the divine right of Preſbytery. A Diſſenter, however, and an *undermining* Diſſenter, are as different, as a Churchman, and a *perſecuting* Churchman. If I am accuſed of exerciſing private judgment, of acting according to the dictates of my own conſcience, of preaching Chriſtianity to thoſe who chooſe to hear me, referring to the Scriptures as my authority and the ſtandard of my faith, and to the teſtimony of my neighbours for the character of my morals; if theſe things conſtitute guilt, or infer ground of ſuſpicion; "I am not careful to anſwer in this matter. If "it be ſo, my God whom I ſerve is able to deliver me "from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver "me out of my accuſers' hands. But if not, be it known "unto them, that I will not ſerve their gods, nor wor"ſhip the golden image which they have ſet up." Any farther charge, with whatever ſolemnity it be made, muſt recoil with infamy on their own heads, while I anſwer

with Paul, "Neither can they prove the things where-
"of they now accuſe me. But this I confeſs, that after
"the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God
"of my fathers, believing all things which are written
"in the law and the prophets. And have hope towards
"God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there
"ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and
"unjuſt. And herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have al-
"ways a conſcience void of offence toward God, and
"toward men." Acts xxiv. 13. When I hear of plots and conſpiracies againſt the Church and the State, of engines to ſap the foundation of the one, and attempts to undermine the conſtitution of the other; and when theſe diabolical works of darkneſs are imputed to me, either directly or conſequentially, not by the irreligious, but by men who profeſs to be the diſciples of Chriſt, and of ſome of whom I have been accuſtomed to hope better things; then indeed it is only in the hiſtory of my bleſſed Saviour, that I can find at once a parallel to my injury, and an effectual relief from my excruciating pain. "Remember," ſaith he, "the word that I ſaid
"unto you, the ſervant is not greater than the Lord.
"If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute
"you*. Falſe witneſſes did riſe up; they laid to my
"charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me
"evil for good, to the ſpoiling of my ſoul†." For it was
"not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have
"borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did
"magnify himſelf againſt me, then I would have hid
"myſelf from him. But it was thou, a man, mine
"equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance, we took
"ſweet counſel together, and walked unto the houſe
"of God in company‡. Bleſſed are ye when men
"ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſpeak all

* John xv. 20. † Pſal. xxxv. 11. 12. ‡ Pſal. lv. 13. 14.

"manner of evil againſt you FALSELY for my ſake. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your re- "ward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets "which were before you." Matt. v. 11. 12.

ANOTHER ſpecimen of Mr. R.'s mode of attack, combined with a very awkward attempt at defence, will be found in a note, p. 24. "See Miſſionary Magazine, "Vol. III. No. XXI. Pages 69 and 70, publiſhed at "Edinburgh, Feb. 1798. As I will have occaſion to "allude to this work, it is certainly proper to ſtate what "the Editors have, I believe, declared, that it was never "publiſhed under the authority of any Miſſionary Society "in this country, but by a certain individual or more "who were connected with them. Thoſe Societies "allow no Miſſionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as "from them, or with their approbation, without exami- "nation by Miniſters of the Goſpel and other Managers. "The Glaſgow Miſſionary Society, in particular, preſcribe "a courſe of ſpecial ſtudy to thoſe who offer themſelves "as Catechiſts for the Heathen. But how far that work, "bearing a name ſo popular, and publiſhed as it was "under the inſpection of a Miniſter then in connection "with the Church of Scotland, may have, eventually, or "deſignedly, prepared the way for a new Sect in the land, "I acknowledge I have not information ſufficient to "determine."

I INQUIRE not into the propriety of ſtating anew what was explicitly declared, once and again, by the Editors of the Miſſionary Magazine. But I queſtion the conſiſtency of attempting to condemn *Lay-Preaching*, and at the ſame time, to juſtify *Miſſionary Societies*. On Mr.

R.'s principles, they muſt both be condemned. It is in vain to plead that thoſe Societies allow no Miſſionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them, or with their approbation, without examination, and that by Miniſters of the Goſpel, as well as other Managers. It is equally in vain to claim for the Glaſgow Miſſionary Society, in particular, the merit of a practice, by no means peculiar to them, that of preſcribing a courſe of ſpecial ſtudy to thoſe who offer themſelves as Miſſionaries. Nor will it at all mend the matter to give thoſe Miſſionaries the guarded title of Catechiſts to the Heathen. Pleas like theſe will be regarded as a very ſlender ſubterfuge, by conſiſtent High Church-men of any denomination; and Mr. R. has been taking a vaſt deal of pains, to deprive himſelf, and his friends, of the benefit of their ſhelter. The firſt queſtion with him ſhould be, What are theſe Miſſionary Societies? I ſuppoſe, it will be allowed, that I anſwer preciſely in the ſpirit of his Pamphlet, when I ſay, They are ſelf-conſtituted and ſelf-authoriſed Aſſociations, which can ſcarcely fail to unite with the innovating ſpirit of the age, conſiſting of Clergymen, Laymen, Elders, Deacons, Probationers, Lay-Preachers, Vagrant Teachers of Sunday Schools, Private Chriſtians, Members of the Eſtabliſhed Church, Members of the Seceſſion, Members of the Relief Church, and—horrible! O horrible!—Members even of the diſorderly Tabernacles. The next queſtion is, What do theſe Miſſionary Societies take it upon them to do? Mr. R. admits, They "*allow* "Miſſionaries to go forth to Heathen lands, *as from them*, "*or with their approbation:*" a clumſy circumlocution, intended ſeemingly to be a cautious way of acknowledging the fact, that the Miſſionary Societies ſend Miſſionaries abroad, and ſet them ſolemnly apart to their work. Well, but do theſe Societies do any thing more than ſend Miſſionaries? Yes, it is admitted, nay pleaded in their

defence, that they allow no Miſſionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them, or with their approbation, without examination by Miniſters of the Goſpel, and *other Managers:* that is, (for the paſſage does need a commentary) theſe Societies, beſides referring Miſſionaries to the reſpective Churches to which they may belong, for ordination, (a plan which was at leaſt projected) inſiſt upon it as indiſpenſible, that their Miſſionaries ſhall be examined *by other Managers*, by men, whether Clergymen or Laymen, of one Church or another, appointed for the purpoſe from among their own mixture, and that by the ſelf-conſtituted authority of their multifarious aſſociation. Emboldened perhaps by the ſuppoſed ſtrength of this general apology, Mr. R. now becomes ſomewhat communicative. He tells us, that one of the Miſſionary Societies, in particular, goes even a ſtep farther, at leaſt with regard to Catechiſt Miſſionaries: they "*preſcribe a* "*courſe of ſpecial ſtudy* to thoſe who offer themſelves as "Catechiſts for the Heathen." If, in addition to the above information, Mr. R. will have the goodneſs to tell us what we ought to think of a *Catechiſt*, we ſhall be able in return to tell him, what he ought to think of the whole miſſionary ſyſtem. "Catechiſts," ſays Mr. R.* "*are* "*Eccleſiaſtics.* They poſſeſs *delegated*, but *limited* autho-"rity." Theſe concluſions he deduces from the doctrine, that they can be ordained by none but Miniſters of the word, in their regular, eccleſiaſtical, judicial capacity. And I ſhould ſuppoſe, he will not deny that the ſame power, which alone can *delegate*, is that alone which can *limit* the authority of this ſubordinate "eccleſiaſtical cha-"racter," or even preſcribe for it the previous courſe of ſpecial ſtudies.—Let any man now read Mr. R.'s Pamphlet, and then ſay, whether, inſtead of attempting to defend

* Page 72.

the Miſſionary Societies, *he* ought not, even from *his own* account of them, to brand their general procedure, and their very conſtitution, as being fraught with diſorder, and ſacrilegious uſurpation.

I WILL yield to no man living, in concern for the cauſe of Miſſions, or in joy at the ſucceſs of the Miſſionary Societies. I am ſenſible, however, that a Church of Chriſt, is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the proper, the legitimate Miſſionary Society. Individual Chriſtians ſtand related to the Heathen world, by a tie, which, I truſt in God, they will never diſown; but Chriſtian Churches have the moſt immediate right to claim for their Maſter the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion. When individual Chriſtians hear the cry of the Heathen, and are called upon to ſeparate, or aſſociated exertion, in their favour, they will naturally ſay, as Boaz to Ruth, "It is true, "that I am thy near kinſman: howbeit there is a kinſ-"man nearer than I. If he will perform unto thee the "part of a kinſman, well, let him do the kinſman's part; "but if he will not do the part of a kinſman to thee, "then will I do the part of a kinſman to thee, as the "Lord liveth." When the propoſal is made, were not the practical anſwer of the kinſman, in queſtion, too ſimilar to the firſt part of the anſwer of the kinſman alluded to, Miſſionary Societies, in their preſent form, had never been known. But if the nearer kinſman will ſay of the poſſeſſion "I cannot redeem it for myſelf, leſt I mar "mine own inheritance," why is he willing that it ſhould utterly periſh? why does he not add to the near kinſman who is after him, and who is willing to comply, "Re-"deem thou my right to thyſelf, for I cannot redeem it?" —On ſuch grounds we may apologiſe for the Miſſionary Societies, and in doing ſo, we ſhall cover the multitude of ſins, which are ſo induſtriouſly alleged againſt Lay-Preaching.

It is not a little curious to obſerve a zealous champion for eccleſiaſtical regularity, ſo willing to ſlur a ſcheme, in which perhaps he happens to be perſonally concerned, although on his profeſſed ſyſtem an intolerable enormity; while the object of his ſlander, the Patron, and example of diſorganiſation and anarchy, has, with all his partiality for the ſame ſcheme, confeſſed from the very beginning, its anomalous character, and its ſecondary merits. In proof of this fact, let me be indulged with a quotation from my Sermon in Defence of Miſſions, which was preached before the Edinburgh Miſſionary Society in February 1797, and publiſhed in the courſe of the ſame year.

"To cure them of bigotry, and to produce humilia-
"tion, let every religious community obſerve, that the
"very exiſtence of ſocieties for propagating the goſpel,
"is an evidence of the deficiency of conſtituted churches.
"Had they not all been wanting in zeal, or in abilities,
"or both, ſuch ſelf-created inſtitutions would not have
"taken place. It is indeed very remarkable, that while
"all churches have profeſſed to imitate the primitive
"model, they have almoſt all agreed to neglect a very
"conſpicuous part of it, the deſtination of a proportion
"of miniſters to the labours of itinerancy. This cer-
"tainly ſhould not be neglected ſo long as the diffuſion
"of the goſpel remains incomplete; and yet, while ec-
"cleſiaſtical judicatories are buſied every day about the
"ſettlement of miniſters in formed congregations, and
"where a temporal proviſion for their maintenance is
"ſecured, the ſending of Miſſionaries is almoſt unknown;
"when it does happen, it originates, not ſo much in the
"zeal of the conſtituted authorities of the church, as in
"that of individuals who aſſociate for the purpoſe of
"prompting them to their duty; and the office of a

"Miſſionary itſelf is ſo ſeldom recommended, and ſo eaſily "given away, that the men who venture to undertake it, "are generally regarded as wild enthuſiaſts, and are ſome- "times, in fact, very ill qualified for the important taſk. "It cannot be pleaded, that there is a want of preachers; "for where proper means are uſed, there will always be "a ſupply proportioned to the demand. Neither can "want of reſources be pleaded; for certainly a church "has the ſame reſources which a ſociety has. Experi- "ence has always ſhewn that Chriſtians are willing to "contribute towards the propagation of the goſpel; and "contributions might, in general, be raiſed with greater "advantage by a church than by any other body of men. "Let us confeſs, then, that the zeal of individuals has "often ſurpaſſed the zeal of the churches of Chriſt in "their collective capacity; and let thoſe churches beware "of preferring cumberſome and lifeleſs forms of pro- "cedure to duties of real importance, which have been "much neglected. Miſſionary Societies were called for "by the commanding voice of neceſſity. Let them be "countenanced by the lovers of Jeſus and of ſouls, until "the churches be reſtored to primitive harmony and "vigour. And let it not be unnoticed, that by the ſame "principle upon which we juſtify a Miſſionary Society, "we muſt approve of other voluntary miſſionary under- "takings. "Would God! that all the Lord's people "were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit "upon them." Many, it is ſaid, ſhall run to and fro, "and knowledge ſhall be increaſed. But hitherto our "itinerant evangeliſts ſeem to be neither ſufficiently nu- "merous nor reſpectable. "The harveſt truly is plen- "teous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, "the Lord of the harveſt, that he will ſend forth labourers "into his harveſt." Matt. ix. 37. 38.*

* Pages 34.—37.

At the end of his abortive attempt to defend the Miſſionary Societies, Mr. R. comes round with a back ſtroke upon the Miſſionary Magazine. "How far that work, "bearing a name ſo popular, and publiſhed as it was "under the inſpection of a Miniſter then in connection "with the Church of Scotland, may have, eventually, "or deſignedly, prepared the way for a new Sect in the "land, I acknowledge I have not information ſufficient "to determine." Here nothing is aſſerted, but room is left for ſuppoſing any thing, at leaſt any thing that is bad. Great and manifold are the advantages of this kind of management. In the firſt place, the aſſailant, whatever reception he may meet with from his adverſary, is ſure of an eaſy and a ſafe retreat. He does not commit himſelf. In the next place, he avoids the odium of ſeeming to exaggerate, and leads his readers to believe, that whatever he does poſitively aſſert, muſt be demonſtrably true, ſince he ſeems ſo conſcientious in diſtinguiſhing between his teſtimony, and his conjectures. Nor will his apparent diffidence, be readily aſcribed to the uncertainty of his ſuggeſtion, but rather to the meekneſs and modeſty of his nature. Thus, a hint will with many go farther than a libel, and be catched at, as a clue, which is to lead them through the labyrinths of a myſtery of iniquity.

The publication of the Miſſionary Magazine, by a Miniſter then of the Church of Scotland has already been explained. Its popular name is nothing to its prejudice, unleſs it can be ſhewn, that it was uſed for a cover. Thus there is no ſin in the popular name of a Preacher, if he can ſay that he has not ſought popularity to gratify ambition, or to obtain a benefice. But a name can never be called a pretext or a cover, in a work that is abſolutely free from concealment. In all the volumes of the Miſſionary Magazine, it will be difficult to collect as

much ſhifting and craft, as are concentrated in the ſingle note before us. The unpardonable ſin, indeed, of that publication has been, that it is uniformly open and explicit.

But, "it may have ſo far, eventually, or deſignedly, "prepared the way for a new Sect in the land." When we have attended to the nature of the conſequence here ſuggeſted as imputable to the Miſſionary Magazine, we ſhall be better able to judge, both of the probability of the ſuggeſtion, and of the manner in which it ſhould affect the character of that work. The fair meaning of the word Sect, is, "A body of men following ſome par-"ticular Maſter, or united in ſome tenets." No Sect, I apprehend, of Proteſtant profeſſed Chriſtians will ever acknowledge that they call any one Maſter, except Jeſus Chriſt. The only juſt idea then of Chriſtian Sect, among Proteſtants, while the term is uſed ſimply, without appreciating the ſpecific merits of a given Sect, is that of a "body of men united in ſome tenets." In this ſenſe the word Sect is perfectly harmleſs, and may be applied with equal propriety and reſpect to every diſtinct ſociety of Chriſtians, whether at home, or abroad, whether eſtabliſhed by civil law, and conſtituting what is called a National Church, or arranged under the comprehenſive title of Diſſenters. Thus, Mr. R. belongs to one Sect, and I belong to another. Neither of us on this account, deſerves either praiſe, or blame; at leaſt not till it be aſcertained which Sect is preferable. It is true, indeed, that the exiſtence of Sects in the Church of Chriſt, which is one, although often overruled by him for good, is a ſtriking proof of our ignorance and depravity; it calls for general humility and mutual forbearance; and ſhould quicken our deſire for that bleſſed world where we ſhall be made perfect in love, and ſhall ſee face to face, know-

ing even as we are known. If, therefore, by uſing the word Sect, Mr. R. meant merely to ſtate the fact that a certain diſtinct Chriſtian Society had been formed; his language would have been innocent, if not even edifying. But the ſpirit of the paſſage brooks not the interpretation. It ſeems, indeed, to be a prevailing fault among the members of his Sect; that, becauſe they are the majority, the claimants, and the poſſeſſors of civil privilege, they often apply the term Sect excluſively to others, and avowedly as a term of condemnation and reproach.

But this is "a *new* ſect." So croaked the Papiſts at the time of the Reformation; and to this hour, they perſiſt in demanding of the Proteſtant, "where was his religion before Luther?" I frankly confeſs, however, that a new ſect is a remarkable circumſtance. It naturally excites inquiry, and even jealouſy; and it ought to be improved by every Chriſtian, as a call in Providence for great ſearchings of heart. But if all this commotion be at once aſcribed to the occaſion of it, the concluſion is haſty and unwarrantable. A previous queſtion ſhould be patiently and impartially conſidered, Whether does the blame lie with the new Sect, or with one or more of the old ones?

In no caſe, perhaps, of this nature, will the ſolution of ſo complicated a queſtion be eaſy. On the one hand, many are given to novelty and change: on the other, many are bigottedly attached to exiſting uſage. With ignorance may be found obſtinacy and pride, no leſs frequently and ſtrongly than fickleneſs and vanity. The calls of ſelf-intereſt may alſo lead both ways. Nor ſhould conſcience be excluded from either ſide. In addition to theſe things, there are the yearnings of affection, the paroxyſms of wrath, the heavy trials of meekneſs

and charity, which, in the painful ſtruggles of ſeparation, are borne even by the pious with various ſucceſs. In ſhort, it is likely there will be faults on both ſides. Inſtead therefore of prejudging the queſtion by a contemptuous appellation, the Chriſtian ſhould conſider it as a ſubject of extreme delicacy, requiring the utmoſt poſſible tenderneſs of inquiry, the utmoſt gentleneſs and modeſty of deciſion.

A NEW Sect has a claim on the generoſity even of its enemies. Its diſadvantages exceed the powers of calculation. Having every thing to arrange, and unaccuſtomed as yet with their new ſituation, the moſt ſanguine members of it can hardly hope to avoid many faults at leaſt of inexperience; yet the eyes of malignant perſpicacity faſten keenly upon them; many arts are uſed to multiply the manifold occaſions of variance, and to increaſe the animoſity even of ſtrife; at all events, they have not had time to ſhew themſelves to the world, and to eſtabliſh their character by the fruits of their practice. In a ſituation ſo critical, the whiſper of jealouſy may be fatal as the poniard of the deadly aſſaſſin. Never was the danger of what is new greater than in the eventful period of the preſent times. Some novelties have lately been pernicious and alarming; of courſe ſuſpicion readily falls upon novelty of every kind. Mr. R. and many of his clerical brethren have been eager to ſeize this extraneous advantage of the day, and to mingle it with the merits of theological diſcuſſion. The policy of this management is as powerful as apparent. While Mr. R.'s criticiſms are perhaps ſcarcely read, his oblique charges of conſpiracy, ſedition, or mere innovation, however unwarrantable, uncandid, or ambiguous, will at leaſt have the tendency to diſparage the character, to mar the comfort, to injure the circumſtances, and to abridge the liberty of

his ſuſpected opponents. Alas, Mr. Robertſon!—
"Charity ſuffereth long and is kind; charity envieth
"not; charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth
"not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is
"not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in
"iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things,
"believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all
"things."

But this is "a new Sect *in the land*." Aye, there's the rub! Would Mr. R. have denounced this heretical party, if they had lived in another country? Would he have ſtrained ſo hard to confute one of their ſubordinate opinions, if their exertions were confined to a diſtant part of his own country? A fair attack upon their principles might indeed be the duty of a conſcientious oppoſer, whoſe ſituation enabled him to obſerve their progreſs; but dark inſinuations againſt their ſincerity are the offspring of rivalſhip, the reſources of rancour. The trial of our love is the love of our neighbour. If we cannot endure to dwell with ſects in the land, we ſhall in vain profeſs to regard them with charity in any other quarter.

The charge of preparing the way for this new Sect in the land, is puſhed home upon the Editors of the Miſſionary Magazine, with the horns of a dilemma. Their work has had this effect, "eventually, or deſignedly." The deſign of the Editors has already been explained. The eventual effect of their performance is very likely ſuch as Mr. R. ſuppoſes. Nor will the Editors be ſorry at this eventual circumſtance, until facts be produced which will prove it an evil.

But the point which Mr. R. is at a loſs to determine,

is, *How far* the Magazine has prepared the way for the Sect. Here, I muſt candidly own I am at a loſs too, and that for the following reaſons. I am not only ignorant what number of men, women, and children may have read the Miſſionary Magazine, and what degree of credit, its readers may have given it; but I am confident that that Magazine has not had the honour, or the guilt, excluſively, of preparing the way. Other cauſes certainly have co-operated to the ſame effect, and it is difficult to eſtimate the influence of each. For example, I have not information ſufficient to determine how far this way may have been prepared, by the exiſtence of different Sects in the ſame Church, and ſometimes in the ſame Collegiate charge; by the diſcordant principles of the wild and moderate parties in the Church of Scotland; by their frequent ſquabbles and their occaſional harmony; by the increaſing violence of the profeſſedly moderate, and the increaſing tameneſs of their miſnamed opponents; by miniſters acting under the law of patronage while they affect to diſapprove of it; by the inceſſant occaſion of triumph which this inconſiſtency affords to their mercileſs moderate brethren; by the avowed maxim of many modern eccleſiaſtical leaders, "better have Seceders out of the church than in the "church," with the various meaſures to which it gives riſe; by the regulations relative to Chapels of Eaſe; by wreſting from miniſters the command of their pulpits; by the late Paſtoral Admonition; by the unanimity of that Admonition; and by the Reſolutions reſpecting Vagrant Teachers and Sunday Schools. But above all, beſides theſe, and many ſimilar prediſpoſing cauſes for a new Sect, I really have not ſufficient information to determine, how far the way may not have been prepared for it, by the bleſſing of God upon the means of his grace; by ſcriptural views of the nature of Chriſt's kingdom which is not of this world; by love to Chriſt, by

love to the brethren, by love and by pity for perishing souls.

Our remaining Animadversions on Mr. R.'s performance shall be introduced by a quotation from his Conclusion.

"I do not know how far the doctrine of Lay-Preach-
"ing, in the full sense of that word, may be followed
"out by any party which has arisen in this country.
"Men will often hold in theory, what they find it impos-
"sible, or inexpedient, to reduce to practice. While,
"therefore, they give it out, as the right of all Christians,
"to preach the Gospel, they may, consistently enough,
"require a degree of preparation, in those whom they,
"as a Society, particularly support in the exercise of that
"right. At the same time, it is clear as noon-day, that
"any system which holds forth a slight preparation as
"necessary for the Ministry, tends to degrade that office
"in the eyes of mankind; and is likely in the end to
"terminate in another system, in which any few indivi-
"duals may erect themselves into a Church, and mutu-
"ally administer the ordinances of the Gospel to one
"another.

"However careful those men may be in the admis-
"sion of members, opinions which some of them have
"propagated, can scarcely fail to unite with the innovat-
"ing spirit of the age. Men naturally transfer into
"Religion those opinions which they entertain upon
"Politics. It is scarcely to be supposed, that any who
"thought themselves wise enough to direct the helm of
"the nation, will continue to bear the restraints which

" Preſbyteries, amongſt our moſt popular claſſes of Diſ-
" ſenters, are in uſe to lay upon them. Retaining ſtill a
" form of piety, they will, therefore, graſp at a ſyſtem ſo
" congenial with their ideas upon another ſubject. Even,
" therefore, where the authority of the Parent Society
" does not at all extend, its opinions may have their in-
" fluence; and may there foſter a ſpirit of faction, detri-
" mental to the peace of every Chriſtian Society, and
" dangerous to the beſt intereſts of theſe lands.

" The miſchiefs ariſing from the doctrine of Lay-
" Preaching, in a religious point of view, have been well
" deſcribed by the Rev. Dr. Jamieſon, in his Remarks
" on the Rev. Rowland Hill's Journal. According to
" that reſpectable writer, it tends to ſupport a perpetual
" revolutionary Government in the Church. I may
" farther aſſert, that it has a tendency altogether to over-
" turn the office of a Public Teacher. If every Chriſtian
" has a *right* to preach the Goſpel, he has an *equal right*
" to diſpenſe every ordinance of Chriſtianity. Thus it is
" only for want of an auditory, that the loweſt of the
" people, do not become prieſts of the high places. But
" though none ſhould ſubmit to their Miniſtry, yet who
" can prevent their exerciſing it to their own families?
" Can any man queſtion their *right*, with reſpect to thoſe
" over whom God has given them a natural authority.
" Thus we have reſtored, what the proud Sceptic has
" long wiſhed to ſee, the Patriarchal age! in which every
" man does what is right in his own eyes; and, without
" the controul of any other, acts as prieſt and prophet of
" his own family. Were not the ſimplicity of the Patri-
" archal age now loſt, we might hope, that the plainer
" principles of the Goſpel would continue for a time to
" operate. But from the preſent temper of men, we have
" much reaſon to fear, that infidelity would grow apace;

" till Chriſtianity at laſt retired, and left her unnatural
" children in the darkneſs of error and of ſuperſtition.
" Surely the Infidels of the day cannot, without ſurpriſe,
" behold religious men aim at that very end, which, by
" craft or argument, they have been unable to accompliſh;
" and can ſcarcely fail to applaud a ſyſtem, which, for
" the preſent, they deride as weak and enthuſiaſtic."

It is impoſſible to read this paſſage, without remembering the bitter complaint of the Pſalmiſt: " his words " were ſofter than oil, yet were they drawn ſwords." In the outſet Mr. R. confeſſes his ignorance how far the doctrine, which he has been combating, may be followed out by any party which has ariſen in this country. Surely this confeſſion might have ſhewn him the propriety of letting them alone. Inſtead of this, however, he proceeds, in his uſual ſtyle of malignant ſuppoſition, to allude to thoſe whom he had already branded, as " a New " Sect in the Land;" and aſcribes to them a ſyſtem, calculated to degrade the office of the miniſtry, to foſter a ſpirit of faction, to diſturb the peace of every Chriſtian Society, to endanger the beſt intereſts of theſe lands, and to ſhew that the men who eſpouſe it, are aiming at that very end, which infidels have been unable to accompliſh. Thus, upon confeſſed ignorance as to facts, and accumulated miſrepreſentation as to ſuppoſed practice and deſign, Mr. R. has reared a maſs of accuſation, which, if it could for a moment be believed, muſt deprive his opponents in a theological queſtion, of their property, their liberty, and their lives. Nor is even this the worſt. By blackening their character, he would make them a proverb, and a by-word, and a hiſſing in the midſt of their ſufferings. He would deprive them of the charity of the churches of Chriſt; he would render them the objects of diſguſt and horror to every pious mind; he

would even deny them the ſympathy that is ſhewn by the multitude to ordinary malefactors, and lead every one who ſhould kill them, to think, that he did God ſervice.

The ſneer at this "new Sect," as holding in theory, what they find it impoſſible, or inexpedient, to reduce to practice, is a proof of that ignorance which Mr. R. had juſt confeſſed, and on account of which he ought to bluſh for his temerity in pretending to ſpeak of them. They never held in theory that Chriſtians might preach, except in ſo far as they were fit for it; their church order is calculated to diſcover and aſcertain this fitneſs; and wherever it is found, the exerciſe of it, inſtead of being impracticable, or inexpedient, becomes highly edifying to the church, as well as uſeful to others. Upon this point, ſmall as their experience is, they can nevertheleſs, where their churches have been formed, ſpeak from experience. Nor is the experiment a new one. In the ſame way, congregational churches have, in every age, been ordinarily ſupplied with paſtors. That the new Sect ſhould endeavour to inſtitute theological ſeminaries, for the improvement of thoſe whoſe gifts are diſcovered to be promiſing, though little cultivated, is no practical contradiction of their theory, but the very reverſe. It is a proof, however, that when Mr. R. accuſed them of deſpiſing learning, he knew not what he ſaid, nor whereof he affirmed. Having his judgment warped by what he has been accuſtomed to, he thinks that a theological ſeminary is a proof, that the New Sect requires "a certain degree of *preparation*," in thoſe whom they ſupport; whereas the fact is, they only provide for a certain degree of *improvement* in thoſe whom they find, by experience, to be worth ſupporting. They are not guilty of the abſurd folly of letting any man among them ſtudy for

the miniſtry who pleaſes, if he only be free from public ſcandal; or of the abſurd tyranny of making every ſtudent ſtudy for years, before it be tried by the church whether he ought ever to have ſtudied at all.

But, ſays Mr. R. "any ſyſtem which holds forth a "ſlight preparation as neceſſary for the miniſtry, tends "to degrade that office in the eyes of mankind." Here, our ſyſtem, whatever it may be, is ſuppoſed to hold forth a ſlight preparation as neceſſary for the miniſtry, and the aſſertion is of courſe applied to it, that it tends to degrade the miniſtry. As theſe, and many ſimilar obſervations throughout his pamphlet, proceed upon the aſſumption, that the members of the "New Sect" are patrons of ignorance, and even enemies to learning; while Mr. R. and his controverſial adherents are no doubt the people with whom wiſdom ſhall live and die; I think it may be edifying to ſearch a little into the juſtice of it.

I am ſo well convinced of the utility of Learning to a Miniſter of the Goſpel, that I have often wondered, why arguments were thought neceſſary to prove it. Wherever learning really exiſts, in a man otherwiſe qualified for the Miniſtry, it will ſhew its own advantages to the conviction of all. This is ſo manifeſtly true, that when I ſee Clergymen boiſterouſly declaiming about the neceſſity of Learning, for a Miniſter, I am ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, either that they want to obtain the reputation of more learning than they have, and are attempting to cover their real deficiency, by their oſtentatious pretenſions; or, that their object is, to ſecure, not a learned Miniſtry, but the privilege of deciding upon the learning of thoſe who ſhall be received into the Miniſtry. No one diſputes the advantage of Capital to a Merchant. If a man have knowledge of buſineſs, induſtry, integrity, and other pet-

ſonal qualifications, the utility of his Capital will ſpeak for itſelf. The rich merchant has no occaſion for making a diſplay of his opulence, or upbraiding his neighbours for their poverty. He leaves theſe arts to the needy adventurer, who ſeeks to eſtabliſh a credit which he does not deſerve, or to the all-graſping monopoliſt, who wants an excluſive charter for the trade he purſues. After all, however, money is only an inſtrument of commerce. It is hard to ſay, how little may be ſufficient to begin with; and daily obſervation proves, that with a very little indeed, the man of induſtry and prudence, may go on and proſper, while the boaſted wealth of the Chartered Company is the very cauſe of its miſconduct and its ruin.

It is one thing to ſay, that "a ſlight preparation is "neceſſary for the Miniſtry;" and quite another, that a few opportunities of improvement, are all that circumſtances enable to afford. This diſtinction would form a ſolid plea for the New Sect, although the opportunities which they afforded, were confeſſedly contemptible. But as Mr. R. is groſsly ignorant of their whole ſcheme, it ill becomes him to expreſs an opinion, eſpecially an unfavourable one, upon any part of their procedure.

Means of improvement may be inferior, and yet not contemptible. The Univerſities of England afford greater advantages for Literature, than thoſe of Scotland; yet men, who have been educated in Scotch Univerſities, have perhaps diſtinguiſhed themſelves as much for their eminent learning, as any who have been educated in Engliſh Univerſities. Nay, many Diſſenters whoſe education has been derived from ſome private obſcure Academy, have ſhamed whole graduated hoſts in the public ſeats of literature. Where opportunities are ſmall, the diſadvantage is often more than counterbalanced by additional

diligence. And when a man's ſtudies are directed to a ſpecific object, and the whole of his time devoted to them, his progreſs will ſurely be more remarkable, than when he is obliged to attend to many things of queſtionable utility, and to teach for his ſubſiſtence, while he ſhould be ſtudying for the Miniſtry.

The ſources of knowledge have now become more generally acceſſible. It will not be denied, that whatever is moſt uſeful in the courſes of Logic, Rhetoric, and Moral Philoſophy, may be found by every Engliſh reader, in the writings of Reid, Beattie, Blair, and Stewart. As to Natural Philoſophy, beſides the numerous rudimental treatiſes on the ſubject, opportunities frequently occur, in different places, of attending popular Lectures on it, illuſtrated by more numerous experiments than are commonly exhibited in a Univerſity courſe; and it may be doubted whether one Divinity Student in ten, is really able to follow his Profeſſor through a ſcientific illuſtration of the various propoſitions in Phyſics. Finally, where ſhall we find a more ſolid and ample diſcuſſion of all ſubjects in Theology than amongſt our Engliſh Divines? What is the meaning, then, of all this ſenſeleſs outcry about a contempt of learning, and an encouragement of groſs ignorance, while the ſources of information are juſt as free to thoſe who are called Lay-Preachers, as to thoſe who call themſelves the Regular Clergy of the Church? After all that can be ſaid upon the ſubject, the proficiency of individuals will be judged of neither by their opportunities, their perſonal pretenſions, nor even the teſtimony of their brethren, but by the actual proofs which they give to the public of their reſpective ability.

Mr. R. may reſt aſſured that I do not mean to keep ſilence on the ſubject of languages. Latin is a good help in the ſtudy of univerſal Grammar. It opens to us

many elegant writings of antiquity, and many works of theological erudition, though moſt of them very tedious, particularly among the Dutch and Germans. It will always be among the accompliſhments of the general ſcholar. But a man may be a *learned* miniſter of the word of God, and yet know nothing at all about Latin. He may, without Latin, acquire the moſt perfect acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew, the original languages of the Holy Scriptures; and if, in addition to this, he acquire, what many a Latin ſcholar has not, an accurate acquaintance with his mother tongue, I apprehend he will poſſeſs a very competent degree of knowledge for his work, as far at leaſt as language is concerned.

WHATEVER be thought of diſpenſing with the knowledge of Latin, it will undoubtedly be granted, that it is of leſs conſequence for a divine to be ignorant of it, than to be ignorant either of Greek or Hebrew. I know that the Church of Scotland requires of her Miniſters to be acquainted with all the three. But what is ſaid to be the fact as to this matter? Will Mr. R. aſſert that one half of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland are really acquainted with their Hebrew bibles? Did he never hear of men getting juſt as much Hebrew as might enable them to paſs trials, and then never looking more at it?—of ſome candidates getting their Hebrew Pſalm written out for them in Roman characters, that they might be able to read it?—and of ſome whole Preſbyteries prudently diſpenſing with Hebrew trials altogether, leſt the trial ſhould prove too trying for all parties? If Mr. R. be able to deny all this, I ſhall not contradict him, I ſhall even rejoice if I find that ſuch reports are erroneous*. But if

* For the prevalent ignorance of Hebrew among the clergy, ſee the teſtimony of a prophet of their own, in the Preface to Wilſon's Hebrew Grammar.

he cannot pretend that they are, let him learn a little more modeſty, on the ſubject of literature. Ignorance of either or both the original languages of the Bible is inexcuſeable in any man who receives a ſalary, that he may devote his whole life to theological purſuits; and it is particularly ſhameful in thoſe who have had good opportunities of learning them, eſpecially in the preſent times, when ſuch extraordinary exertions have been made, in the way of biblical criticiſm, both by the friends and the foes of the Goſpel.

I BELIEVE the clergy of the Church of Scotland are more generally acquainted with Greek than with Hebrew; yet I ſuppoſe it will not be alleged that I do them injuſtice when I ſay, that their ordinary helps in expounding Scripture, are Engliſh Commentaries. Now, I ſhould be glad to know, if Poole's Annotations, Henry's Commentary, Patrick, Lowth, and Whitby, Clarke, Guiſe, Doddridge, and Macknight, may not be read by Laymen, as well as Clergymen? Nor am I aſhamed to confeſs, that I have often been much more edified, by the remarks which had occurred to a plain man, upon a ſerious peruſal of his Engliſh Bible; than by the lecture of a Clergyman, who had collected for retail, the jarring opinions of a maſs of Commentators.

LIKE every other good thing, learning may be abuſed; and this will infallibly be done by a Chriſtian Miniſter, when he makes it his boaſt, or when he truſts to it, for confounding, and vanquiſhing opponents, whom he ſuppoſes to be illiterate. Were there no other fault in this conduct, it is ungenerous to attack an adverſary with a weapon, of which he is underſtood to be deſtitute. But God has given a deadly wound to hierarchical claims, even over the unlearned, by granting men the Bible in

their mother tongue. Let not the theological ſcholar deſpiſe tranſlations. A tranſlation was uſed by the Apoſtles in their writings of inſpiration. The moſt inaccurate tranſlations that have been made of the Scriptures, when attentively examined, will be found, even in ſpite of the errors held by many of the tranſlators, to contain the ſubſtance of the doctrines of ſalvation. And, bleſſed be God, our Engliſh tranſlation is ſo very excellent, that if a man hope to carry his point, merely by mangling it, that Scripture may ſeem to ſupport extravagance and conjecture, he will certainly expoſe himſelf to merited deriſion.

Of this truth, I have never met with more abundant illuſtration than in the Pamphlet before me. To produce all the abſurdities of Mr. R.'s criticiſm would be to compile an index to the work. I ſhall certainly not give my readers the trouble to review above one of them; yet I think Mr. R. will have little reaſon to complain, as my choice of an example will ſhew that I am willing he ſhould poſſeſs every poſſible advantage. In Acts viii. 1.—4. Mr. R. had not to do with one of thoſe paſſages, which Peter tells us, are hard to be underſtood, but with a plain hiſtorical narrative, written by one of the moſt perſpicuous writers in the New Teſtament, and that with ſuch ſimplicity, that had no controverſy been affected by it, the mind of man would never have dreamed of a difficulty or a doubt about its meaning. With this eaſy taſk, Mr. R. has had the aſſiſtance of a learned friend. Let us examine the ſucceſs of their combined exertions*.

Mr. R. who leads the van, commences an attack at once upon the text, and the generality of its interpreters. His quarrel with both is, that they have overrated a perſecu-

* See pages 35.—41.

tion, which he thinks a little one becauſe it included only one murder and a number of baniſhments. He allows that the hiſtorian *would naturally ſtyle* that perſecution great, though in reality little, which, for a time, deprived the ſaints at Jeruſalem of ſo many faithful paſtors. But whatever apology he may be willing to make for Luke's *ſtyle*, it is obvious that, in narrating the ſame event, Mr. R. would not have adopted ſo *inaccurate* an expreſſion.

He is content, however, that Luke and our Engliſh tranſlators ſhould ſhare the fault of ambiguity between them. Accordingly, to make the paſſage intelligible, he propoſes the following literal tranſlation. "And Saul was conſenting to his (Stephen's) death. "And *on that day* there was a great perſecution againſt "the Church which was at Jeruſalem; and all were diſ- "perſed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, "except the Apoſtles. And devout men carried out "Stephen to his burial, and made a great lamentation "over him. As for Saul he made havoc of the Church, "entering *into the houſes*, and haling men and women, "committed them to priſon." In this tranſlation, two phraſes, on account, I preſume, of their peculiar importance, are printed in the italic character, and have the correſponding words of the original, ſubjoined in a note. With regard to the firſt, every ſchool-boy knows, that the Greek word for *day*, (the whole ſtory may be told without the formality of Greek quotations) like its correſponding Engliſh word, may ſignify, either, the time between the riſing and ſetting of the Sun, called the artificial day; or the time from noon to noon, called the natural day; or indefinitely any appointed or fixed time. Which of theſe meanings is to be affixed to it, in particular paſſages, muſt be pointed out by the connexion, and by common ſenſe. Guided by both, our Engliſh tranſlators have

rendered the phraſe where it occurs in the paſſage before us, "at that time," underſtanding it as neceſſarily including a period of ſuch duration, as to give the events referred to it, time to take place. Had they uſed Mr. R.'s word, and ſaid "in that day," every intelligent reader would have underſtood them, as uſing the word in its large acceptation; as if one, writing the hiſtory of this ſeaſon, ſhould at ſome future period ſay, "there "was a ſcanty crop, and *in that day*, there would have "been great diſtreſs, had not large ſubſcriptions been "made for the importation of grain." But Mr. R. inſiſts, that the term *day* is never uſed indefinitely in a plain hiſtorical narration. If even this were granted, it would be neceſſary to underſtand the hiſtorian, as telling us, on what day a perſecution began, which, from what he immediately adds, evidently continued to rage for ſome time after. But Mr. R. will have it that there is no evidence whatever, that this perſecution was *protracted beyond* the day of Stephen's martyrdom.

Now who does not ſee, that the perſecution and the conſequent diſperſion are referred to the ſame date? If both are to be confined to the individual day of Stephen's martyrdom, the poor exiles muſt have made a notable day's journey; for "on that day," or more emphatically as Mr. R. would read it, "on the ſame day," all "were "diſperſed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." Mr. R.'s learning will perhaps enable him to tell us, how this was accompliſhed. Arguing like him, upon ſuppoſitions, it may indeed be ſuppoſed, (at leaſt nothing leſs extraordinary will bear him out in his hypotheſis) that as the primitive Chriſtians, eſpecially the preachers among them, were prudent men, they muſt have foreſeen the evil, and ſecured for themſelves places in the different MAIL COACHES which left Jeruſalem that morning. Be-

fore we deny this, Mr. R. may aſſert, as he does in another place, that it is incumbent on us to ſhew, at leaſt the *probability* that this was not the caſe; for *if it was*, the proprietors had certainly authority to take into their coaches as many paſſengers as they could hold, and they may have been conſtructed to hold as many as Noah's ark; which *if it was ſo*, they muſt have travelled inconceivably faſter than can be imagined by the illiterate advocates for Lay-preaching, in theſe degenerate days of ſloth and retardation. *So far therefore from it being probable*, that the diſperſion throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria did not take place on the ſame day with the perſecution, *it may be viewed as certain* that it did.

By ſuch ſure and certain proofs Mr. R. has ſhewn that, ſince the time of Moſes, there has been an order of men ſet apart for the public inſtruction of mankind, and regularly educated for that office*; that, beſides the apoſtles and ſeventy diſciples, the hundred and twenty mentioned Acts i. were made up of rulers among the Jews, ſuch as Nicodemus and Joſeph of Arimathea†; that Church means Clergy, or at leaſt eccleſiaſtical judicatory‡; that Apollos was a ſcribe§; and in ſundry other places of his learned diſſertation, he has overthrown the arguments for Lay-Preaching in the ſame ſatisfactory and edifying manner.

The other phraſe, into *the houſes*, appears to have been marked that Mr. R. might have the honour to maintain, what nobody ever dreamed of denying, that, Saul's entering into *the houſes*, did not ſignify entering into *all* the houſes; and becauſe the expreſſion could not fairly be extended to *all*, he thinks there is no great harm in confining it to *a few*. Although this degree of limitation is

* P. 88. † P. 11. ‡ P. 81. § P. 43, and p. 76, note.

quite as unwarrantable as the oppoſite degree of extenſion, Mr. R. aſſerts it as a matter of courſe, and after vapouring throughout a whole paragraph, about abſurdities with which his opponents have no concern, he does himſelf the pleaſure at the end of it to pronounce the modeſt deciſion, that their alleged manner of reaſoning, "ſhews a groſs ignorance of ſcripture criticiſm."

MANY ſimilar ſpecimens might be given of Mr. R.'s learning, from his remarks on this paſſage, but it is time we ſhould pay our reſpects to his learned friend. This obliging auxiliary having probably reviſed the Section before us, ſeems to have been grieved to find his brother ſo likely to be worſted by this ſame troubleſome "ſcattering abroad throughout "the regions of Judea and Samaria." Setting his wits to work, therefore, he produced and ſuggeſted to Mr. R. an *idea*, ſo conſolatory, yea ſo tranſporting, that he was unable at firſt to judge of its merits. "It appeared to "me *ſo good*, ſays he, that for a time I *ſuſpected* its truth." This marvellous idea is, that the preachers of the goſpel did not leave Jeruſalem, ſo much on account of the violence of the perſecution, although Luke ſeems to ſay ſo, as in obedience to the command of Chriſt, "when they "perſecute you in one city, flee ye into another." This idea has various recommendations. It may help perhaps to account for the celerity of the diſperſion, becauſe men go quickly on, when they have an inclination for the journey. But the quality which ſeems to have endeared it to Mr. R. is, that it gives to the diſperſion a character of regularity, and may make it even admit of the forms of modern eccleſiaſtical procedure. Diſregarding Luke's account, that it took place at the ſame time with the perſecution, Mr. R. and his learned Friend conceive the perſecution to have been viewed by the preachers only as a ſignal to depart, in conſequence of which they either

of their own accord, *or in concert with the Apoſtles*, left the city, and diſtributed themſelves in every direction. Now, all the world will grant, that our Saviour's command made their flight warrantable; but that it, rather than the perſecution, was the cauſe of that flight, requires proof. Of the proof produced by Mr. R. this is the ſum. The verb rendered "ſcattered abroad," has the general ſignification of "ſeparating by whatever means;" and as there is another verb in the Greek language, whoſe appropriate meaning is to "diſperſe by vio-"lence," *therefore* we ſhould not ſuppoſe that the verb of general meaning, although allowed to ſignify ſeparation by *whatever means*, and immediately connected here with a great perſecution, can admit of being applied to the particular caſe of violent diſperſion. After ſupporting this concluſion by examples worthy of the argument, it is remarked that, among other anomalies in language, verbs in a paſſive form *may ſometimes have* a neuter or middle ſignification. As proof that this has happened *for once* with the very word in queſtion, we are told, that, when Pharaoh *commanded* the Iſraelites to make brick without ſtraw, in conſequence of which "they were ſcattered abroad," the meaning is, not that they were diſperſed by his perſecution, but that "they *of their own accord* went in every "direction in queſt of ſtubble." If this was ſpontaneouſneſs, what is compulſion? Although, however, the ſolitary example had been as preciſely for, as it is in fact againſt, the concluſion, that would never have warranted the drawing of it, in the caſe before us. Unleſs we chooſe to violate every rule of interpretation, and to turn exceptions into general rules, we muſt acknowledge that, in this paſſage, Luke connects the perſecution and the diſperſion as cauſe and effect; and in Acts xi. 19. where the ſame word is uſed, he expreſsly aſcribes the one to the other.

The preceding criticisms may perhaps shew us what some gentlemen would think of a modern persecution. If Mr. R. could make the public believe one half of his evil surmisings against the "New Sect in the land," I should not wonder to see popular indignation so strongly excited against the Tabernacle congregation of this city, as to occasion a tumult in which the life of at least one individual might be lost, while the rest found it necessary to flee from the place. Having a fellow feeling with the sufferers, I confess I should be much inclined, in giving an account of the affair, to adopt the style of Luke, and to say, "on that day there was a great persecution "against the Church, and all were scattered abroad." But in perfect unison with their mode of criticising, Mr. R. and his learned friend might allege that by such expressions, the persecution, if it at all deserved that name, was greatly overrated. It was but the tumult of a single day. There was only one life lost, the life of a heretical advocate for Lay-Preaching, and as for the flight of the rest, they went away *of their own accord*, and the inconvenience sustained by them was hardly to be minded, when it might have the salutary effect of banishing a "New Sect from the land." If such apologies could be made even in the case of a riot, what might we not expect to hear, if they could disperse, or murder us, under forms of law.

No part of theological knowledge is more important than sacred criticism. In this way, much has lately been done, by Lowth, Kennicot, Newcome, Blaney, Campbell, and several others, for illustrating, and vindicating Divine Revelation. The Minister of the Gospel will often derive more assistance in his work, from attention to the original, than from poring over the folios of the most celebrated Commentators. He may often

expound Scripture with much advantage, by propoſing an improved tranſlation, which has occurred to him; and I believe it will be found that there is no improved tranſlation of any conſequence, which will not ſoon commend itſelf to the judgment of intelligent hearers, even although unacquainted with the original. But if, like the magic lantern of the juggler, the preacher's knowledge of languages, be uſed in a way, that can only confound the ſimple and ignorant; if, in the warfare of controverſy, his critical faculties be proſtituted to the purpoſes of a mere pop-gun manufactory of exploſion and ſmoke, his exertions, however laborious, are contemptible indeed! Nor is this all. If the Engliſh reader be given to underſtand that the plaineſt paſſages of his Bible may be explained into oppoſite meanings; that great may really be little; the events of a week or more, only the ſcene of a ſingle day; and the diſperſions of perſecution, concerted emigrations of a voluntary nature; what muſt he think of all this? what confidence can he any longer have, either in the hiſtory, or the doctrines of Scripture? It is true, his tranſlation ſays, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." But a little Greek might perhaps enable him to alter, if not even to reverſe the propoſition. In this ſtate of mind, his only alternative will be, either to pin his faith to the ſleeve of a prieſt, and acquieſce in ignorance as the mother of devotion; or, to withdraw his confidence from the Bible altogether, and ſeek what he may be tempted to reckon the more intelligible inſtructions of ſome other guide. Such ſeems to me to be the evident tendency of the criticiſms contained in Mr. R.'s pamphlet. We might ſmile at the vanity of the Pedant, if we did not behold in him the Pioneer of Infidelity.

Who appears to be guilty now, "of degrading the

" office of the miniſtry in the eyes of mankind?" We are far from diſregarding the advantages of learning. We conceive it, however, to be the duty of the brethren, not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, but to exhort one another, that, beſides mutual edification, the gifts beſtowed by the Head of the Church may be diſcovered, exerciſed, and approven; that thoſe who have received them may be ſet apart to the work of the miniſtry; and that while they labour among us, and are over us in the Lord, and admoniſh us, we may eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake, and be at peace among ourſelves. In this way, ordinarily, we hope to be ſupplied with paſtors and teachers, and we ſhall neglect no means in our power, for making them workmen that need not to be aſhamed. Mr. R. may call this, if he pleaſes, " admitting *ſomething like* a ſtanding miniſtry*;" and he may further aſſert, " that this ſyſtem is likely to " terminate in another in which any few individuals may " erect themſelves into a Church, and mutually admini- " ſter the ordinances of the Goſpel to one another." But when he uſes ſuch contemptuous language, he ought to take heed, leſt he be found to vilify conſcientious fellow Chriſtians, if not even *ſomething like* the conſtitution of a Church of Chriſt. There are ſtill a few remnants of holy Scripture, which have not been diſſolved in his critical digeſter. Jeſus hath ſaid, " Where two or three " are gathered together in my name, there am I in the " midſt of them†." " Whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe " little ones which believe in me, it were better for him " that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and that " he were drowned in the depth of the ſea. Wo " unto the world becauſe of offences: for it muſt needs " be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom " the offence cometh‡." As to degrading the miniſterial

* P. 58. † Matt. xviii. 20. ‡ Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

office in the eyes of mankind; we are not afraid that the ſimple rule of Scripture will ſuffer, upon a fair compariſon with human inventions, even in the eyes of mankind*. But if it ſhould, we dare not depart from Scripture, to pleaſe men; nor ſhall their ſneers diſmay us, while we have Scripture on our ſide. It is written, "I will de-" ſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to nothing " the underſtanding of the prudent. Where is the wiſe? " where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world? " hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?" —" Ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many " wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many " noble *call you*. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things " of the world, to confound the wiſe; and God hath " choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the " things which are mighty, and baſe things of the world, " and things which are deſpiſed hath God choſen, yea, and " things which are not, to bring to nought things that " are; that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence." 1 Cor. i. 19. 20. 26. 27. 28. 29.

Since writing the preceding ſheets, I alſo have had the happineſs of receiving aſſiſtance from a learned friend, whoſe critical abilities will hardly be denied even by Mr. R.; and as a more complete confutation of this Gentleman's abſurdities, or a more able expoſure of prieſtcraft, and clerical ambition in general, could not have been written; I ſhall make no apology for enriching theſe Animadverſions with ſome ample quotations from a poſt-

* Compare Matt. xviii. 15.—20. with all the Synodical Decrees, Ecumenical Deciſions, Canon Laws, Papal Bulls, Epiſcopal Mandates, Acts of Aſſembly, and Paſtoral Admonitions, which have been enacted, ordained, or iſſued, ſince the days of the Apoſtles.

humous work juſt publiſhed, intitled Lectures on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. I call the Author my friend, becauſe he is as decided, as I could poſſibly wiſh, both in favour of what is called Lay-Preaching, and of Congregational Churches; and I ſuppoſe Mr. R. will acknowledge his merits, not merely becauſe his character for talents and learning has been eſtabliſhed by ſeveral works of univerſal celebrity; but becauſe he was no vile, upſtart Lay-Preacher, but one who was regularly educated for the clerical functions, one "who *officially* acted under a "ſolemn engagement to maintain the diſcipline of the "Church of Scotland," a miniſter of that eſtabliſhed Church, a Doctor Theological, a Profeſſor of Divinity, nay Principal of Mariſchal College, Aberdeen: in ſhort he was, GEORGE CAMPBELL, D. D.

THE firſt paſſage, which I ſhall produce, gives a view of the genius of the Goſpel, the conſtitution of the primitive Church, and its relation to Civil Government.

"THE moral precepts of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt are re-
"markably ſublime and pure. They are admirably cal-
"culated for regulating the paſſions and affections of
"the heart, out of which, as Solomon has obſerved, are
"the iſſues of life. The doctrines he taught, which are
"the motives whereby an obſervance of the precepts is
"enforced, are all purely ſpiritual, ariſing from conſider-
"ations of the divine nature, and of our own; eſpe-
"cially of God's placability and favour, of the teſtimony
"of conſcience, of the bleſſedneſs which the principles
"of true religion, faith and hope, love to God, and
"love to man, infuſe into the heart; and from conſide-
"rations regarding the future retribution both of the
"righteous and of the wicked. The poſitive inſtitutions
"or ceremonies he appointed, are both few and ſimple,

" ſerving as expreſſions of the love and gratitude of his
" diſciples to God, their common parent, and to Jeſus
" their maſter, the oracle of God; of their engagements
" to the Chriſtian life, and their perfect union among
" themſelves. And that whilſt theſe inſtitutions were
" ſuffered to remain in their native ſimplicity, which
" conſtituted their true beauty and excellence, it was im-
" poſſible they ſhould be miſunderſtood. With regard to
" the founding of what might be called a polity or ſtate,
" it is manifeſt that nothing could be farther from his
" intention. " His kingdom," he acquaints us, " is not
" of this world." It is not of a ſecular nature, to be
" either propagated or defended by the arm of fleſh, or
" to have its laws enforced by human ſanctions, or any
" ſuch temporal puniſhments as merely human authority
" can inflict.

" It is impoſſible to conceive a greater contraſt be-
" tween the ſpirit which his inſtructions breathe, and that
" ſpirit of pride and domination, which not many centuries
" afterwards became the predominant ſpirit of what then
" came to be denominated the church. Again and again
" did Chriſt admoniſh his apoſtles, and other followers,
" to live as brethren and equals, not to affect a ſuperiority
" over their fellow-diſciples, or over one another; inaſ-
" much as in this, his kingdom would differ in its funda-
" mental maxims from all the kingdoms of the world:
" that that perſon alone would there be deemed the
" greateſt, whoſe deportment ſhould be the humbleſt,
" and he alone ſuperior, who ſhould prove moſt ſervice-
" able to the reſt. As to worldly monarchies or com-
" monwealths, of whatever kind, he taught them to re-
" gard it as their duty, to ſubmit to ſuch powers as Pro-
" vidence ſhould ſet over them; chearfully paying tri-
" bute, and yielding obedience to every human ordinance

" and command that ſhould not be found to contradict " the law of God. " Render to Cæſar, ſaid he, the " things which are Cæſar's, and to God the things which " are God's." Far from affecting any ſecular power " himſelf, he refuſed a royalty of this ſort, when the peo- " ple would have conferred it, and would not take upon " him to decide in a matter of civil right and property, " though deſired. " Man," ſaid he to the perſon who " applied to him, " who made me a judge or a divider " over you?" Then he ſaid to the people, " take heed " and beware of covetouſneſs;"—ſupporting his admoni- " tion as uſual by an affecting parable. It was the end " of his inſtitution to purify the heart, and his leſſons " were ever calculated for extirpating the ſeeds of evil " that remained there. In a ſimilar manner, when the " diſciples privately contended among themſelves who " ſhould be greateſt, he took occaſion to warn them " againſt ambition. Jeſus calling to him a child, placed " him in the midſt of them, and ſaid, " Verily I ſay unto " you; unleſs ye be converted," quite changed in your " notions and conceptions of things, " and become as " children, ye ſhall never enter the kingdom of heaven. " Whoſoever, therefore, ſhall become humble as this " child, ſhall be the greateſt there." The ſame maxims " were warmly inculcated by his apoſtles; and in their " time, under the happy influence of their inſtructions, " generally prevailed among Chriſtians.

" Now indeed was formed a community of the diſ- " ciples of Jeſus, which was called his church, a word " that denotes no more than ſociety or aſſembly, and is " ſometimes uſed in the New Teſtament with evident " analogy to the common uſe, to ſignify the whole com- " munity of Chriſtians conſidered as one body, of which " Chriſt is denominated the head, and ſometimes only

" a particular congregation of Chriſtians. In this ge-
" neral ſociety, founded in the unity of their faith, their
" hope, their love, cemented, as it were, by a commu-
" nion or joint participation, as occaſion offered, in re-
" ligious offices, in adoration, in baptiſm, and in the
" commemoration of the ſufferings of their Lord, pre-
" ſerved by a moſt friendly intercourſe, and by frequent
" inſtructions, admonitions, reproofs when neceſſary,
" and even by the excluſion of thoſe who had violated
" ſuch powerful and ſolemn engagements: in all this, I
" ſay, there was nothing that interfered with the tem-
" poral powers. They claimed no juriſdiction over the
" perſon, the liberty, or the property of any man. And
" if they expelled out of their own ſociety, and, on ſa-
" tisfying their conditions, re-admitted thoſe who had
" been expelled, they did in this only exerciſe a right,
" which (if we may compare great things with ſmall,
" and heavenly things with earthly) any private compa-
" ny, like a knot of artiſts or philoſophers, may freely
" exerciſe; namely, to give the benefit of their own
" company and converſation to whom, and on what
" terms, they judge proper: a right which can never
" juſtly be conſidered as in the leaſt infringing on the
" ſecular powers. The Chriſtians every where acknow-
" ledged themſelves the ſubjects of the ſtate, whether
" monarchical or republican, abſolute or free, under
" which they lived; entitled to the ſame privileges with
" their fellow-ſubjects, and bound as much as any of
" them (I might ſay more, in reſpect of the peculiar o-
" bligation which their religion laid them under) to the
" obſervance of the laws of their country. They plead-
" ed no exemption but in one caſe; a caſe wherein eve-
" ry man, though not a Chriſtian, has a natural title to
" exemption; that is, not to obey a law which is unjuſt
" in itſelf, and which he is perſuaded in his conſcience

"to be ſo. But in regard of rights merely of a perſonal "or private nature, over which the individual has a "greater power, far from being pertinacious aſſerters of "theſe, they held it for an invariable maxim, that it is "much better to ſuffer wrong, than either to commit or "to avenge it. This, in my judgement, is the true "footing on which the apoſtolical church ſtood in rela- "tion to the ſecular powers*."

My next quotation will inform Mr. R. to whom belongs the right of exerciſing eccleſiaſtical diſcipline.

"When one Chriſtian had ground, real or ſuppoſed, "to complain of the conduct of another as unbrotherly "and injurious, after private methods of reclaiming the "offender had been tried in vain by the offended, it be- "longed to the congregation to judge between them; "and either to effect a reconciliation, or to diſcard one "who, by his obſtinacy in the wrong, ſhewed himſelf "unworthy of their fellowſhip. This method had been "clearly pointed out to them by their great founder. "If thy brother," ſays he, "treſpaſs againſt thee, go and "tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he "hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother; but if he will "not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that "in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word "may be eſtabliſhed; and if he neglect to hear them, "tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the "church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publi- "can. Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind "on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven; and whatſoever ye "ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven." What "ye thus do, agreeably to the inſtructions I give you,

* Vol. I. pages 40.—45.

" God himſelf will ratify. The practice of the apoſtolic " age, which has the beſt title to the denomination of " primitive, is the ſureſt commentary on this precept of " our Lord. Not only were ſuch private offences " then judged by the church, that is, the congregation, " but alſo thoſe ſcandals which affected the whole Chriſ- " tian fraternity. Accordingly, the judgment which Paul, " by the Spirit of God, had formed concerning the in- " ceſtuous perſon, he enjoins the Church, to whom his " epiſtle is directed, that is, (to uſe his own words for " an explanation) " them who at Corinth are ſanctified " in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be ſaints, to pronounce and " execute." And in his ſecond epiſtle to the ſame Church, " (chap. ii. v. 6.) he ſays, in reference to the ſame de- " linquent, " Sufficient to ſuch a man is the cenſure " which was inflicted by many;" ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, by the " community. And (v. 10.) " To whom ye forgave a- " ny thing," addreſſing himſelf always to the congrega- " tion, " I forgive alſo." We admit, with the learned " Dodwell*, that in the cenſure inflicted on the inceſtu- " ous perſon, the Chriſtians at Corinth were but the exe- " cutors of the doom awarded by the apoſtle. Nor does " any one queſtion the apoſtolical authority in ſuch mat- " ters over both the flock and the paſtors. But from the " words laſt quoted, it is evident that he acknowledges, " at the ſame time, the ordinary power in regard to diſ- " cipline lodged in the congregation; and from the confi- " dence he had in the diſcretion and integrity of the Co- " rinthians, he promiſes his concurrence in what they " ſhall judge proper to do. " To whom ye forgive any " thing, I forgive alſo."†

* De Jure Laicorum ſacerdotali, c. iii. § 10.

† Vol. I. pages 54.—56.

In the two next quotations, Dr. Campbell will give us his opinion, whether the ſucceſs of the goſpel does at all depend on the perſonal, or party claims of preachers.

"I MAY be deceived in regard to the pretenſions of a "miniſter, who may be the uſurper of a character to "which he has no right. I am no antiquary, and may not "have either the knowledge or the capacity neceſſary for "tracing the faint outlines of ancient eſtabliſhments, and "forms of government, for entering into dark and criti-"cal queſtions about the import of names and titles, or "for examining the authenticity of endleſs genealogies; "but I may have all the evidence that conſciouſneſs can "give, that I thankfully receive the teſtimony of Chriſt, "whom I believe, and love, and ſerve. If I cannot know "this, the declarations of the goſpel are given me to no "purpoſe: its promiſes are no better than riddles, and a "rule of life is a dream. But if I may be conſcious "of this, and if the Chriſtian religion be a revelation "from heaven, I may have all the ſecurity which the ve-"racity of God can give me, that I ſhall obtain eternal "life.

"No," interpoſes a late writer*, "Cannot God juſt-"ly oblige men, in order to obtain the benefits which it "is his good pleaſure to beſtow, to employ the means "which his good pleaſure hath inſtituted? It pleaſed not "him to cleanſe Naaman the Syrian from his leproſy by "the water of any other river than the Jordan; inſomuch, "that had Naaman uſed the rivers of Syria for this pur-"poſe, he would have had no title to expect a cure." "Certainly none, Mr. Dodwell. But could any thing

* Dodwell Parænefis, 34.

"be more explicit than the oracle of God pronounced "by the prophet? "Wash in Jordan seven times, and "thou shalt be clean." Naaman did not, and could not "misunderstand it. Whereas, had the prophet said "barely, "Wash seven times, and thou shalt be clean;" "and had the Syrian then washed seven times in Abana "or Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, and remained uncured, "would he have had reason to regard Elisha as a true pro- "phet? Could he have formed from this transaction the con- "clusion which he did so justly form in favour of the God "of Israel? Yet such an expression of the promise, where- "in an essential article of the condition is suppressed, "would be necessary to make the case parallel to the pre- "sent. *He who believeth and is baptized*, saith our Lord, "*shall be saved:* You qualify his promise with the addi- "tional clause, "if he be baptized by a minister who has "himself received baptism and ordination in such a par- "ticular manner." But where do you find this qualifi- "cation specified? Scripture is silent. The Spirit of God "hath not given us the remotest hint of it; would it not "then be wiser in you to follow the advice which Solo- "mon hath given by the same Spirit? *Add thou not unto his* "*words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* The "terms of the gospel-covenant are no where, in the sa- "cred pages, connected with, or made to depend on, "either the minister, or the form of the ministry, as Naa- "man's cure manifestly was on his washing in one parti- "cular river. But so strange is the inconsistency of which "human nature is susceptible! No person can be more "explicit than this man, in admitting that there is no- "thing in scripture from which we can infer that any par- "ticular form of polity was, for every age and country, "appointed in the church. A passage to this purpose I "shall soon give you in his own words. Nay more, "that very episcopacy, for which he so strenuously con-

"tended, making the exiſtence of Chriſtianity depend u-
"pon its reception, is, by his own account, not only deſ-
"titute of ſcriptural warrant, but is not properly of
"apoſtolical origin, not having been inſtituted till af-
"ter the death of the apoſtles, in the ſixth or ſeventh
"year of the ſecond century: for even John, who liv-
"ed the longeſt, is not ſaid to have reached that period.
"Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who ſo boldly
"and avowedly preſume to foiſt into God's covenant
"articles of your own deviſing, neither expreſſed nor
"implied in his words? Do you venture, a worm of the
"earth? Can you think yourſelf warranted to ſtint what
"God hath not ſtinted, and following the dictates of
"your contracted ſpirit, enviouſly to limit the bounty of
"the univerſal parent, that you may confine to a party,
"what Chriſt hath freely publiſhed for the benefit of all?
"Is your eye evil, becauſe he is good? Shall I then be-
"lieve, that God, like deceitful man, ſpeaketh equivo-
"cally and with mental reſervations? Shall I take his
"declaration in the extent wherein he hath expreſsly
"given it, or, as you, for your own malignant purpoſe,
"have new-vamped and corrected it? "Let God be
"true, and every man a liar." But as for you who
"would thus pervert the plaineſt declarations of the
"oracles of truth, and inſtead of repreſenting Chriſt as
"the author of a divine and ſpiritual religion, as the
"great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him as the
"head of a faction, your party forſooth! I muſt ſay
"that I have ſtronger evidence that you have no miſſion,
"than all your traditions, and antiquities, and catalogues,
"will ever be able to ſurmount. For if "he whom
"God ſendeth, ſpeaketh the words of God," (and this
"is a teſt which Chriſt himſelf hath given us) he who
"contradicteth God's words is not ſent by him. This

"is alike the language of Scripture, and the language "of common ſenſe. Yours is neither*."

"That there was no ſuch dependance, as is ſuppoſed, "on any thing in the form of the miniſtry, is manifeſt "alſo from this, that in the directions given to Chriſtians, "as to the judgments they ought to make of thoſe who "may aſſume the character of teachers in divine things, "the people are never directed to an examination of, "what I may call, the oſtenſible ſource of the authority "of thoſe teachers, but ſolely to the conſideration of "their character and conduct, and of the doctrine which "they teach. "Beware of falſe prophets," ſaid our "Lord, "who come to you in ſheep's clothing, but in-"wardly they are ravening wolves." But how ſhall we "beware of them, or by what criterion ſhall we diſtin-"guiſh the falſe from the true? Shall we critically exa-"mine their ſpiritual pedigree, and ſee whether, by an "uninterrupted ſucceſſion of regular baptiſms and ordi-"nations, they be lineally deſcended from the apoſtles? "Impoſſible. A method this which would involve eve-"ry thing in impenetrable darkneſs, and plunge all the "hopes and proſpects of the Chriſtian into a ſcepticiſm, "from which there could be no recovery. On the con-"trary, the teſt he gives is plain and familiar. Mark "his words:—"Ye ſhall know them by their fruits. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? "Even ſo, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, "but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good "tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a cor-"rupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bring-"eth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and caſt into "the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know

* Vol. I. pages 88.——91.

"them." And the apoſtle John ſays, "Believe not e-
"very ſpirit but try the ſpirits whether they are of God."
"And how are we to try them? The ſequel plainly
"ſhews, that it is by the coincidence of their doctrine
"with that of the goſpel. The like was alſo the method
"preſcribed under the former diſpenſation by the pro-
"phet. "To the law and to the teſtimony," ſays he,
"if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe
"there is no light in them." A very different mode of
"trial would now be aſſigned by a zealous patronizer of
"the hierarchy, popiſh or proteſtant *."

In connection with the above, it may be edifying to read the following paragraph.

"To aſſign to the Meſſiah, or rather, under that co-
"lour, to procure for themſelves a worldly kingdom, was
"not an errour peculiar to the Jews. The ſame evil
"principle, which in them proved the cauſe of the rejec-
"tion of the true Meſſiah, proved quickly among the Gen-
"tiles, who acknowledged him, the ſource of the groſſeſt
"corruption and perverſion of his inſtitution. After it
"became the aim of church rulers to ſecularize the king-
"dom of Chriſt: they uniformly had it for their object,
"in exact conformity to the example the Phariſees had
"given them, to remove the attention of men from things
"ſpiritual and eſſential, to things corporal and circum-
"ſtantial. And in this, as in all other corruptions, they
"have but too well ſucceeded. The more effectually
"to anſwer this purpoſe, they have not ſcrupled to in-
"troduce ſuch dogmas as tend to ſubvert the ſpirit of the
"goſpel, and are inconſiſtent with the veracity of
"God †."

* Vol. I. pages 103.—105. † Pages 108. 109.

I SHALL now produce the Doctor's ſentiments on what is called Lay-Preaching, in a paſſage where we ſhall ſee how he underſtood the account of the perſecution mentioned Acts viii.

"IT has been ſaid, that in the extraordinary and unſettled ſtate of the church, the ſacred offices were not ſo much appropriated to the miniſters, as to exclude private Chriſtians from occaſionally exerciſing them, eſpecially in the abſence of the former. The firſt order given to the eleven *to make converts* (for ſuch is the import of μαθητευσατε) *to baptize and to teach*, carries in it nothing from which we can diſcover, that it was a commiſſion entruſted to them excluſively as apoſtles or miniſters, and not given them alſo as Chriſtians; and that the apoſtles were particularized, becauſe beſt qualified, from their long attendance on Chriſt's miniſtry, for promoting his religion in the world; but not with a view to exclude any Chriſtians, who were capable, from co-operating with them in the ſame good cauſe. That this laſt was the conſtruction then put upon that charge, appears not improbable, from the ſubſequent part of the ſcripture hiſtory. Philip, though no apoſtle, and probably at that time no more than a deacon, (that is, a truſtee for the poor in matters purely ſecular) did all to the Ethiopian eunuch, which the apoſtles had in charge with regard to all nations. He converted, baptized, and taught him. No reaſonable man can doubt that any private Chriſtian was then, and is ſtill, warranted if he can, to convert an infidel, and to teach him the principles of Chriſtianity. Yet theſe are two important parts of the apoſtolical commiſſion. If I ſhould ſay the moſt important parts, I ſhould not ſpeak without warrant. Our Lord himſelf made proſelytes, and inſtructed them,

" but baptized none, leaving this merely miniſterial " work to his diſciples. Peter was ſent to open the door " of faith to the Gentiles, by the converſion of Cornelius " and his family. But the charge of baptizing them he " truſted intirely to the Chriſtian brethren who attended " him. Ananias, a diſciple, was employed to baptize " Paul. And Paul ſays himſelf of his own miſſion, that " Chriſt ſent him not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel, " denoting thereby, according to the import of the He- " brew idiom, that baptizing compared with preaching, " though a part, was but an inferior and ſubordinate part " of his charge. Nothing here advanced can juſtly be " underſtood to combat the propriety of limiting, for the " ſake of diſcipline, the power of baptizing to fewer hands " than that of preaching, when once a fixed miniſtry is " ſettled in a church, and regulations are adopted for its " government.

" The doctrine I have been illuſtrating, ſo far from " being, as ſome romaniſts ignorantly pretend, one of " the many novelties ſprung from the proteſtant ſchiſm, " was openly maintained at Rome without cenſure, about " the middle of the fourth century, by Hilary, a deacon " of that church, a man of erudition and diſcernment, of " whom I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak afterwards This " commentator, in his Expoſition of the Epiſtle to the " Epheſians iv. 11. 12. has theſe words: " Poſtquam " omnibus locis eccleſiæ ſunt conſtitutæ, et officia ordi- " nata, aliter compoſita res eſt, quam cœperat; primum " enim omnes docebant, et omnes baptizabant, quibuſ- " cunque diebus vel temporibus fuiſſet occaſio." A " little after; " Neque Petrus diaconos habuit quando " Cornelium cum omni domo ejus baptizavit; nec ipſe; " ſed juſſit fratribus qui cum illo ierant ad Cornelium ab " Joppe." Again: " Ut ergo creſceret plebs, et multi-

" plicaretur, omnibus inter initia conceſſum eſt et evange-
" lizare, et baptizare, et ſcripturas in eccleſia explanare."
" Such were the ſentiments of a reſpectable member of
" the Roman preſbytery in thoſe days; for conclave, both
" in name and thing, was as little known at Rome then
" as it is with us at preſent. Now though the gradual
" ſettlement of a regular miniſtry throughout the church,
" would gradually aboliſh an uſage of this kind, it is na-
" tural to conclude, that wherever there happened to be
" a return of the like exigencies, through want of licen-
" ſed paſtors, every private Chriſtian would not only be
" entitled, but bound, if capable, to ſupply the defect.
" So thought the Chriſtians, who were diſperſed on the
" perſecution mentioned Acts viii. For " they that were
" ſcattered abroad," the hiſtorian makes no diſtinction,
" went every where preaching the word." Now the a-
" poſtles remained in Jeruſalem, and ordinary paſtors
" were not yet appointed. This is agreeable to what ap-
" pears to have been the general opinion, and even the
" practice where circumſtances required, as far down as
" Tertullian's time, about the beginning of the third cen-
" tury. This author, the firſt of the Latin fathers, in his
" *Exhortatio ad caſtitatem*, wherein he inveighs againſt ſe-
" cond marriages, having urged that Paul made it neceſ-
" ſary in a biſhop that he be the huſband of one wife, in-
" troduces an antagoniſt replying, that the prohibition to
" paſtors implies a permiſſion to others to marry oftener.
" He anſwers, that the diſtinction among Chriſtians, be-
" tween the prieſthood and the people, who, by the ev-
" angelical law, are all prieſts, is of the church's making,
" that is, as I underſtand him, is not of divine original;
" referring to what appears to have been the approved
" practice of laymen even then, who, when none of the
" clerical order could be had, celebrated the euchariſt, and
" baptized, and ſerved as prieſts to themſelves. " Three

" perſons," ſays he, " though laymen, make a church." " Ubi eccleſiaſtici ordinis non eſt conſeſſus, et offers, et " tinguis, et ſacerdos es tibi ſolus. Sed ubi tres, eccle- " ſia eſt, licet laici:" It matters nothing to the preſent " queſtion, that his doctrine of the unlawfulneſs of ſe- " cond marriages is unreaſonable; it matters nothing, " that his argument is inconcluſive; we are concerned on- " ly with the fact, to which he refers as notorious*."

THE next quotation, though long, will be found full of important matter. The firſt part of it relates to the right of private Chriſtians to deliberate upon eccleſiaſtical affairs. The ſecond part will ſhew what right Mr. R. has to preſume upon the diſtinction of *Clergyman*, and *Layman*, or, to exalt his brethren and himſelf, above others, by giving them the contemptuous title of *Lay-Preachers*.

" IF for our direction in forming a judgment concern- " ing the perſons who were originally, and ſeem to be " naturally, entitled, to have a ſhare in all conſultations " about church-affairs, we recur to the account given us " in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, concerning the aſ- " ſembly convened at Jeruſalem, on occaſion of the diſ- " pute about circumciſion, we can be at no loſs as to the " privilege of the people in this reſpect. Thoſe who com- " poſed that convention were (as the ſacred hiſtorian in- " forms us) the apoſtles, elders, and brethren; firſt the " apoſtles, the extraordinary miniſters of Jeſus, who were " deſtined to be the founders of his Church, and whoſe " office, like the title that expreſſed it, was temporary, " and expired with them; ſecondly, the elders, πρεσβυτεροι " the ſtated and ordinary paſtors, whoſe office was ſucceſ- " ſive and perpetual; thirdly, the brethren, that is, as the

* Vol. I. pages 117.—122.

"term in the New Teſtament is known to denote, pri-
"vate Chriſtians, who poſſeſſed no particular charge or
"office in the Church. And to cut off all pretext, that
"theſe laſt were preſent only as witneſſes or byſtanders,
"the decree runs as much in their name as in the name of
"the apoſtles and preſbyters, being given expreſsly and
"authoritatively as the joint command of all the three
"claſſes mentioned. Thus v. 23, &c. "The apoſtles,
"and elders, and brethren, ſend greeting to the brethren
"which are of the Gentiles. Foraſmuch as we have
"heard, it ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with
"one accord, to lay upon you no greater burden than
"theſe neceſſary things."

"I DO not ſay that that meeting could be denominated
"either a provincial or a dioceſan ſynod, and far leſs a
"general council. This model of management, in re-
"gard to eccleſiaſtic matters, was not then deviſed.
"But that the apoſtles themſelves, notwithſtanding their
"ſupernatural gifts, called the private diſciples to aſſiſt
"in the determination of matters of public concernment,
"may ſerve as demonſtration to us of the natural title
"that ſuch have (whatever be the model) to participate
"in thoſe councils whereby the Chriſtian community are
"to be concluded. And that private Chriſtians conti-
"nued, in the firſt ages, to ſhare in the deliberations of
"their ſynods, we have ſufficient evidence, as was ſigni-
"fied already, from the ancient eccleſiaſtical writings ſtill
"extant.

"HOWEVER, as in the ſpace of a few centuries mat-
"ters were, in this reſpect, greatly altered, and the
"church wore a new face, and as theſe came at laſt to
"be totally excluded, it began of courſe to be maintained
"as a doctrine, that thoſe perſons, who did not belong

" to any of the ſacred orders, were abſolutely unfit for
" being received into their councils, to deliberate and
" judge in ſpiritual and holy things; that for the paſtors
" to admit them, would be to betray their truſt, and pro-
" fane their office; and for ſuch unhallowed men to ar-
" rogate any power in theſe matters, would be no better
" than a ſacrilegious uſurpation.

" But before ſuch tenets as theſe, which ſavour ſo
" much of the political views of an aſpiring faction, and
" ſo little of the liberal ſpirit of the goſpel, could gene-
" rally obtain, ſeveral cauſes had contributed in preparing
" the minds of the people. On every occurrence the
" paſtors had taken care to improve the reſpect of the
" lower ranks, by widening the diſtance between their
" own order, and the condition of their Chriſtian bre-
" thren; and for this purpoſe had early broached a diſtinc-
" tion, which, in proceſs of time univerſally prevailed, of
" the whole Chriſtian commonwealth into clergy and laity.
" The terms are derived from two Greek words, κληρος,
" lot or inheritance, and λαος, people. The plain inten-
" tion was to ſuggeſt, that the former, the paſtors or cler-
" gy, for they appropriated the term κληρος to themſelves,
" were ſelected and contradiſtinguiſhed from the multi-
" tude, as being, in the preſent world, by way of emi-
" nence, God's *peculium*, or ſpecial inheritance.

" It is impoſſible to conceive a claim in appearance
" more arrogant, or in reality worſe founded. God is
" indeed in the Old Teſtament ſaid to be the inheritance
" of the Levites, becauſe a determined ſhare of the ſa-
" crifices and offerings made to God was in part to ſerve
" them inſtead of an eſtate in land, ſuch as was given to
" each of the other tribes. But I pray you mark the dif-
" ference; no where is the tribe of Levi called God's in-

" heritance, though that expreſſion is repeatedly uſed of " the whole nation. Concerning the whole Iſraelitiſh na- " tion, Moſes, who was himſelf a Levite, ſays in an ad- " dreſs to God, Deut. ix, 29,—" They are thy people, " and thine inheritance, which thou broughteſt out by " thy mighty power." The words in the ſeptuagint tranſ- " lation deſerve our particular attention. Ουτοι λαος σου και " κληρος σου ους εξηγαγες εκ γης Αιγυπτου εν τη ισχυι σου τη μεγαλη. The " ſame perſons are in the ſame ſentence declared to be " both the λαος and the κληρος. What, ſays the canoniſt, " at once laymen and clergy? That is certainly abſurd; " the characters are incompatible: yet it did not then appear " ſo to Moſes. Now would it be thought reaſonable or " juſt, that what was allowed to be the privilege and the " glory of every Iſraelite, under the more ſervile eſta- " bliſhment of Moſes, ſhould, under the more liberal " diſpenſation of the goſpel, be diſclaimed by all thoſe " diſciples of Jeſus, who have not been admitted into the " ſacred order, which they, for this reaſon, have called " clerical.

" When we recur to the uſe of the term in the New " Teſtament, we find one paſſage, and but one, wherein " it is applied to perſons. The paſſage is in the firſt " epiſtle of Peter, the fifth chapter, and third verſe, which " is thus rendered in our verſion: " Neither as being " Lords over God's heritage, but being enſamples to the " flock." The words in the original are, μηδ' ως κυριευοντες " των κληρων, αλλα τυποι γινομενοι της ποιμνης. They are part of a " charge given to the preſbyters, or paſtors, relating to " their care of the people committed to them, who are " called God's flock, which they are commanded to feed, " of which they are to take the overſight, not the maſtery, " and to which they are to ſerve as patterns. The ſame " perſons, therefore, who both in this, and in the pre-

" ceding verſe, are ſtyled ποιμνιον, the flock, under the di-
" rection of God's miniſters, the ſhepherds, are alſo called
" κληροι, his inheritance, over whom their paſtors are com-
" manded not to domineer. It is ſomewhat extraordi-
" nary, that in the choice of diſtinctions, which the
" church-rulers ſo ſoon ſhowed a diſpoſition to affect, they
" ſhould have paid almoſt as little attention to the ſtyle, as
" they did to the ſpirit and meaning of the ſacred books.
" Let it be obſerved then, in the firſt place, that this
" diſtinction, ſo far from having a foundation in Scrip-
" ture, ſtands in direct contradiction both to the letter,
" and to the ſenſe of that unerring ſtandard. I am not
" ignorant that ſome expoſitors, jealous for the prieſthood,
" render the term κληροι here, the church's poſſeſſion. Not
" to mention that this explication but ill ſuits the context,
" and annihilates the contraſt between an imperious maſ-
" ter and an engaging pattern, and ſuppoſeth an awk-
" ward ellipſis in the words, allow me to aſk, What were
" the church's poſſeſſions in thoſe days? Was ſhe ſo early
" veſted with lands and hereditaments, for it is to ſuch
" only that the term κληρος, when denoting property or
" poſſeſſion, is applied? Or have thoſe interpreters been
" dreaming of the truly golden age of pope Gregory the
" ſeventh, when the patrimonies of ſome metropolitical
" and patriarchal ſees were indeed like dukedoms and
" principalities, and the grand hierarch himſelf could
" diſpoſe of kingdoms and empires? In the apoſtolic times,
" on the contrary, the church's patrimony conſiſted
" moſtly, I may ſay, in perſecution and calumny, hatred
" and deriſion, agreeably to the prediction of her Lord.

" Some have aſcribed, but very unjuſtly, the origin of
" the diſtinction we have been conſidering, to Clemens
" Romanus, who, in his epiſtle to the Corinthians, which
" I had formerly an occaſion of quoting, contradiſtin-

" guiſhes λαικοι (the laics, as we ſhould be apt to render
" it) among the Jews, from the high-prieſt, the prieſts,
" and the Levites. It ought to be obſerved, that it is
" introduced by him when ſpeaking of the Jewiſh prieſt-
" hood, and not of the Chriſtian miniſtry; neither does
" it ſtand in oppoſition to any one general term, ſuch as
" κληρος or κληρικοι; but after mentioning three different or-
" ders, he uſes the term λαικοι, to include, under one com-
" prehenſive name, all that were not ſpecially comprized
" under any of the former; and in this reſpect it exactly
" correſponds to the application ſometimes made of the
" Latin word *popularis*. In this view it may with equal
" propriety be contraſted with men in office of any kind
" whatever. Thus in ſpeaking of civil government, it
" may be oppoſed to αρχοντες, to denote the people as diſ-
" tinguiſhed from the magiſtrates; or, in ſpeaking of any
" army, to στρατηγοι, to denote the ſoldiers as diſtinguiſhed
" from the commanders or officers.

" I MAINTAIN further, that in the way the term is em-
" ployed by Clement, it does not imply that he conſider-
" ed it as in itſelf excluſive of the prieſthood and Leviti-
" tical tribe, to which the term λαικοι is oppoſed in that
" paſſage. They are here indeed excluded, becauſe ſe-
" parately named, but not from the import of the word.
" But as this criticiſm may, to a ſuperficial hearer, ap-
" pear a mere ſubtlety or refinement, I ſhall illuſtrate it
" from ſome ſimilar examples, which I hope will be
" thought deciſive. Acts xv. 22. " Then pleaſed it
" the apoſtles and elders with the whole Church." Here
" are three orders plainly mentioned and diſtinguiſhed,
" the apoſtles or extraordinary miniſters, the elders or fix-
" ed paſtors, and the church or Chriſtian people. But
" does this imply that the name church does not proper-
" ly comprehend the paſtors as well as the people? By no

"means. They are not indeed, in this paſſage, comprif-
"ed under the term, not becauſe it does not properly
"extend ſo far, (which is not fact) but becauſe they are
"ſeparately named. The import of the expreſſion is,
"therefore, no more than this, "The apoſtles and el-
"ders, with all the Chriſtian brethren, who come not
"under either of theſe denominations." Of the ſame kind
"exactly is the paſſage lately quoted from Peter, where the
"πρεσβυτεροι are oppoſed to the κληροις, not as though the former
"conſtituted no part of God's heritage, or, to adopt the
"modern ſtyle, *clergy*, they only do not conſtitute that
"part, of which they are here commanded to take the charge.
"In like manner Clement's mention of λαικον, after ſpeak-
"ing of the ſeveral orders of the Jewiſh prieſthood, im-
"ports neither more nor leſs than if he had ſaid, "And
"all the Jewiſh people." So that his manner of uſing
"this term affords no foundation for the diſtinction that
"was long after his time introduced; no more than the
"general argument againſt the encroachment of the
"people, or of the paſtors, on each other, taken from
"the rigid obſervance which the different claſſes, under
"the Moſaic economy, had of their reſpective functions,
"affords a foundation (as ſome have ridiculouſly urged)
"for concluding that the orders, in the Chriſtian mini-
"ſtry, were the ſame in number with the Jewiſh. So
"far indeed is Clement from giving any inſinuation of
"this kind, that, in a paſſage formerly quoted, he ex-
"preſsly mentions the Chriſtian orders as being two,
"and as having been clearly and by name predicted in
"the prophetical writings of the Old Teſtament.

"But to return to the diſtinction of the whole church
"into clergy and laity: in after ages they even improved
"upon their predeceſſors. The ſchoolmen (a modeſt
"race, all clergymen) thought it was doing the laymen

"too much honour to derive the name from λαὸς, populus. "It ſuited their notions better to deduce it from λαας, la- "pis, a ſtone. Take for a ſpecimen a few things advanced "on this ſubject by ſome celebrated doctors, as quot- "ed by Altensfaig in his Lexicon Theologicum. "Ca- "pitur clericus pro viro docto, ſcientifico, perito, ſcien- "tia pleno, repleto et experto. E contra laicus capitur "pro viro indocto, imperito, inſipiente et lapideo. Un- "de laicus dicetur a λαος Græce, quod eſt lapis Latine. "Et ſic omnis clericus, in quantum clericus, eſt lauda- "bilis; laicus vero, in quantum laicus, eſt vituperandus. "Clerici quoque a toto genere de jure præponuntur, et "debent præponi laicis." To theſe I ſhall add the ſen- "timents of Cardinal Bona, in relation to the care that "ought to be taken by the clergy, that laymen may not "be allowed to do themſelves harm by ſtudying the pro- "founder parts of Scripture, which their ſtupidity is ut- "terly incapable of comprehending. He kindly mentions, "at the ſame time, the books which he thinks they will not "be the worſe for, and which, therefore, they may be per- "mitted to peruſe. "De laicis in quibus mater cæcita- "tis ſuperbia regnat, quatenus ad ea quæ ſunt fidei et "morum. Cum enim ſicut idiotæ preſumunt ſacram "ſcripturam exponere, quæ eſt profundiſſima omnium "ſcripturarum. Cum iterum habeant quandam honeſta- "tem exteriorem, contemnunt vitam omnium aliorum, "et merito hujus duplicis ſuperbiæ excæcantur, ut inci- "dant in errorem iſtum peſſimum, per quem excæcan- "tur a Deo, ut neſciant diſcernere quid bonum eſt et "quid malum. Quare non omnes ſcripturæ libros legant "laici. Quoniam nihil eſt tam ſanctum et ſalubre et pi- "um quo non contingat abuti, ſic de libris evenit, quo- "rum non eſt culpa, neque ſcribentium, ſed ſcœlus eſt "in abuſu: non tamen arcendi videntur ab opuſculis mo- "ralibus et devotis, nullam in ſe difficultatem, nec am-

" biguitatem, nec abſurditatem in tranſlatione gerenti-
" bus, cujuſmodi ſunt hiſtoriæ, vel vitæ, vel legendæ ſanc-
" torum, nec non meditationes ſanctæ." How conde-
" ſcending is the good doctor! He does not abſolutely
" prohibit the ſtupid and conceited generation of laymen
" from reading ſome of the plainer books of Scripture,
" and indulges them freely in what is better for them,
" ſtory-books and godly meditations, and the legends of
" the ſaints*."

After remarking, that the world is ruled by Names, and illuſtrating their effect in corrupting Chriſtianity, Dr. Campbell ſhews, from what ſpirit Clergymen firſt were led to aſſume the ſacred appellation, Reverend.

" I might add to the above obſervations, that ſome
" carried this ſpecies of innovation ſo far as even, one
" would think, to envy the Pagans the appellations they
" beſtowed on the miniſters of an idolatrous worſhip, and
" on thoſe who preſided in their ſecret and abominable
" rites. The learned doctor lately quoted, though a
" ſincere Chriſtian in his way, poſſeſſed much of that
" ſpirit, and ſeems to regret exceedingly that we have no
" ſuch fine words and high-ſounding titles as hierophant,
" hieromyſt, and myſtagogue. It was the ſame ſpirit
" that prompted, in the paſtors, the affectation of epithets,
" added to their names, expreſſive of their virtues, and
" of the eſteem and veneration of thoſe that approached
" them, ſuch as moſt holy, moſt bleſſed, moſt religious,
" moſt worthy of God, beloved of God, reverend, vene-
" rable, and many others, which it were tedious to enu-
" merate, together with certain ceremonies, ſuch as bowing
" the head, kiſſing the hands, and the like. Of theſe I

* Vol. I. pages 295.——305.

" ſhall only ſay, that though ſome of them became after-
" wards, as words of courſe, mere marks of civil reſpect
" for the office, they were, in their application at firſt,
" intirely perſonal. If we were to ſettle a ſort of ſpiritual
" barometer for determining the preciſe quantity at which
" piety and virtue, at any given time, arrived in the
" church, I could not aſſign a better than the uſe of theſe
" epithets and ceremonies, holding it as an invariable
" canon, that in proportion as the external ſigns multi-
" plied, the ſubſtance of internal religion decreaſed. At
" no time could the Phariſaical ſcribes be accuſed of
" greater oſtentation, or more deſire of greetings in the
" markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, than
" were, a few ages afterwards, the miniſters of the humble
" Jeſus, who had ſo expreſsly warned his followers againſt
" the imitation of their vain-glorious manners. Yet ſuch
" are the manners which even, in theſe more enlightened
" times, the prieſtly pride of ſome prelatical preachers has
" inſtigated them to write whole volumes to revive*."

After repeatedly aſſerting the Scriptural meaning of the word, Church, to be very different from what Mr. R. ſeems to contend for, our Author propoſes an unexceptionable plan for ſettling the point.

" If any impartial hearer is not ſatisfied on this point,
" I would recommend it to him, without the aid of any
" commentator on either ſide of the queſtion, but with
" the help of proper concordances, attentively to ſearch
" the Scriptures. Let him examine every paſſage in the
" New Teſtament wherein the word we render church
" is to be found, let him canvas in the writings of the Old
" Teſtament every ſentence wherein the correſpondent

* Vol. I. pages 317—319.

" word occurs, let him add to theſe the apocryphal books
" received by the romaniſts, which, as they were either
" originally written, or tranſlated by Helleniſts, amongſt
" whom the term εκκλησια was in frequent uſe, muſt be
" of ſome authority in aſcertaining the Jewiſh accepta-
" tion of the word; and if he find a ſingle paſſage, where-
" in it clearly means either the prieſthood, or the rulers
" of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church
" repreſentative, let him fairly admit the diſtinction as
" ſcriptural and proper. Otherwiſe he cannot admit it,
" in a conſiſtency with any juſt rule of interpretation*."

I SHALL conclude theſe quotations, of which I think my readers cannot be tired, with two anecdotes from the ſame author, the one intended to illuſtrate the tendency of High Church honours, when given to the clergy, and the other, the nature of High Church Faith, as inſtilled into the laity.

" I SHALL conclude this lecture with a ſtory, homely
" indeed, but appoſite: An Engliſh country parſon was
" bragging, in a large company, of the ſucceſs he had
" had in reforming his pariſhioners, on whom his labours,
" he ſaid, had produced a wonderful change to the
" better. Being aſked in what reſpect, he replied, that
" when he came firſt among them, they were a ſet of un-
" mannerly clowns, who paid him no more deference
" than they did to one another, did not ſo much as pull
" off their hat when they ſpoke to him, but bawled out
" as roughly and familiarly as though he were their equal;
" whereas now, they never preſumed to addreſs him but
" cap in hand, and, in a ſubmiſſive voice, made him their
" beſt bow, when they were at ten yards diſtance, and

* Vol. I. page 326.

" ſtyled him *your reverence*, at every word. A Quaker, " who had heard the whole patiently, made anſwer; " And ſo, friend, the upſhot of this reformation, of " which thou haſt ſo much carnal glorying, is, that thou " haſt taught thy people to worſhip thyſelf." So much " for clerical and papal claims*."

" IMPLICIT *faith* has been ſometimes ludicrouſly ſtyled " *fides carbonaria*, from the noted ſtory of one who, ex- " amining an ignorant collier on his religious principles, " aſked him what it was that he believed. He anſwered, " I believe what the church believes." The other re- " joined, " What then does the church believe?" He " replied readily, " The church believes what I believe." " The other deſirous, if poſſible, to bring him to particu- " lars, once more reſumes his inquiry; " Tell me then, " I pray you, what it is which you and the church both " believe." The only anſwer the collier could give was, " Why truly, Sir, the church and I both—believe the " ſame thing." This is implicit faith in perfection, and " in the eſtimation of ſome celebrated doctors, the ſum " of neceſſary and ſaving knowledge in a Chriſtian†."

THESE quotations are but a ſmall ſpecimen of the ſentiments of a man, who was unqueſtionably one of the moſt learned divines that ever appeared in the Church of Scotland. They form part of Lectures which were delivered, for many years, with great approbation, to a claſs of ſtudents in divinity, belonging to that Church. The reader will judge how far they patronize the doctrine of Lay-Preaching. When I conſider that Principal Campbell muſt have known, at leaſt as well as Mr. R. what " his ſo- " lemn engagements to maintain the Diſcipline of the

* Vol. II page 201. † Pages 259. 260.

"Church of Scotland" required; I cannot reflect, without renewed aſtoniſhment, on the temerity of my accuſer.

I COME now to the moſt malicious part of Mr. R.'s pamphlet, where he aſſerts that the practice of the "New "Sect in the land" is likely to be attended with political danger.

"HOWEVER careful thoſe men may be in the admiſſion "of members, opinions which ſome of them have propa- "gated, can ſcarcely fail to unite with the innovating "ſpirit of the age. Men naturally transfer into Religion, "thoſe opinions which they entertain upon Politics. It "is ſcarcely to be ſuppoſed, that any who thought them- "ſelves wiſe enough to direct the helm of the nation, "will continue to bear the reſtraints which Preſbyteries, "amongſt our moſt popular claſſes of Diſſenters, are in "uſe to lay upon them. Retaining ſtill a form of piety, "they will, therefore, graſp at a ſyſtem ſo congenial with "their ideas upon another ſubject. Even, therefore, "where the authority of the Parent Society does not at "all extend, its opinions may have their influence; and "may there foſter a ſpirit of faction, detrimental to the "peace of every Chriſtian Society, and dangerous to the "beſt intereſts of theſe lands."

IT is truly hard, that from a clerical opponent, one ſhould ſo ſeldom meet with fair play. I have never yet ſeen an eccleſiaſtic make war upon thoſe, who queſtioned the claims of his hierarchy, without deſiderating, in his conduct, the plain dealing of an honeſt man. The cauſe, it would ſeem, of perſecution, is ſo deſperate and vile, that men muſt either abandon it, or ſubmit to min-

gle artifice with their cruelty. In no caſe, are baſer ſtratagems reſorted to, than when it is the object to filch from adverſaries their good name. In all the annals of aſſaſſination, indeed, it will be found to hold true, that in exact proportion to the malignity of intention is the ſemblance of candour, if not even of friendſhip. "Joab ſaid to Amaſa, art thou in health my bro-"ther? And Joab took Amaſa by the beard with the "right hand to kiſs him. But Amaſa took no heed to "the ſword that was in Joab's hand: ſo he ſmote him "therewith in the fifth rib, and ſhed out his bowels to "the ground*."

Reflections like theſe are abſolutely unavoidable, after peruſing ſuch a paragraph as that which is before me. It will be allowed that it contains the moſt awful charges; yet, from the one end of it to the other, there is not the production of a fact in ſupport of them; the reaſoning is merely hypothetical; and the hinge of the whole is expreſſed with a ſhocking ambiguity, which conceals its weakneſs, and is calculated to increaſe ſuſpicion and alarm. All that was wanting to conſummate the hypocriſy was an affectation of candour, with which accordingly Mr. R. craftily introduces his deadly thruſt. He was wiſe for himſelf, in allowing that the men againſt whom he meditated ruin, "might be careful in the ad-"miſſion of members;" for an ample conceſſion induces a belief, that even in the moſt favourable caſe poſſible, the concluſion muſt follow. But, ſays he, "however "careful thoſe men may be in the admiſſion of members, "—*opinions which ſome of them have propagated.*"—Here is the ambiguity of which I complain. Were Mr. R. croſs-examined as to this phraſe, it is very likely he would be

* 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.

obliged to explain it, as referring merely to their opinions on the ſubject of Lay-Preaching. For my own part, I do not underſtand it at all, if he intend it ſhould refer to any thing elſe. But his purpoſe was better ſerved, by avoiding preciſion. As the phraſe ſtands, many a reader will ſuppoſe that Mr. R's. adverſaries have propagated *political* opinions of a ſeditious or treaſonable nature; and of courſe will ſwallow his inferences at once as obvious and indubitable.

An attempt ſo ſcandalous to prejudice the public mind, connected as it is with ſo atrocious a purpoſe, I conceive, can be accounted for only by aſcribing it to conſcious weakneſs in point of argument, ſeeking to gratify ungovernable reſentment, by other means. The advocates for Lay-Preaching, thoſe of them eſpecially, whom Mr. R. labours to deſtroy, becauſe they have prepared the way for a New Sect in the land, have, from the very beginning, declared, in the moſt explicit manner, their ſenſe of the duty of Chriſtians to civil government*. On this ſubject, their views will be found, not only more Scriptural, but much more decided, than thoſe of the Clergy, in any national church under the ſun. The politics even of thoſe, who boaſt the loudeſt of their loyalty, may

* See the Journal of a Tour, by Meſſrs. Haldane, Aikman, and Rate, undertaken with a view to promote the knowledge of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, page 29. of the Introduction, ſecond edition.—Plan of the Society for Propagating the Goſpel at Home, laſt paragraph,—And their Letter of Inſtructions to Itinerant Preachers and Catechiſts.—Theſe papers which have been printed ſeparately, have been alſo inſerted in the Miſſionary Magazine, and the paſſages referred to will be found Vol. III. pages 59. 60. and pages 482. 483. See alſo A Sermon, by the Writer of theſe ſheets, on the Duty of Chriſtians to Civil Government. It is remarkable, that almoſt the only publications which ſtate the doctrine of ſubjection to the higher powers, in that extenſive and unequivocal manner in which it is treated in the New Teſtament, *have been written by Diſſenters from the national church*

be referred, I preſume, to one or other of the celebrated ſyſtems of Whig and Tory. As to the former, it is notorious that the Whig ſuſpends his obedience to civil government, upon his own opinion of public meaſures. Even the Tory, who pleads for the divine right of kings, connects his allegiance with the reign of ſome particular family. Both hold it lawful to reſiſt, by force of arms, a government of which they diſapprove. But the men, whom Mr. R. and many of his brethren have conſpired to defame as dangerous to the ſtate, have explicitly declared, that they hold themſelves bound in conſcience to be ſubject to *the powers that be*, to the exiſting government, of whatever form, in whatever country their lot may be caſt. Without regard to any opinion they may entertain of the merits of civil rulers, they will obey them in every thing, that caſe only excepted, (which all Chriſtians muſt except,) where they might be conſtrained to ſay, "we muſt obey God rather than men." Even then they would make no reſiſtance, but, if they could not flee, would look to God for grace, to endure perſecution. Meanwhile, they pay taxes, they honour the king, they give honour to all, to whom honour is due, they pray for kings, and for all in authority, and are ready to every good work. Such are the *ſeditious* principles of the men, whom Mr. R. humbly imitating his brethren of laſt General Aſſembly, would hold up to the jealouſy of government, and to public execration.

I HAVE not the leaſt doubt that Mr. R. will deny our ſincerity in theſe profeſſions. I expect this, not only from his hoſtility, but from his apparent ignorance of the ſpiritual nature of the kingdom of Chriſt. If, however, he ſhall ever ſubmit to the plain doctrines of the New Teſtament, he will ſee, that ſuch a political creed is not the expedient of a day, but an important part of

the faith, which was once delivered to the ſaints, and one of the moſt ſtriking features of Chriſtianity, as a religion intended, not for a national engine of ſtate, but for univerſal diffuſion, for peace on earth, and good will to men. He will perhaps be ſurpriſed to hear, that this creed has an intimate connexion with what he is pleaſed to call the doctrine of Lay-Preaching. Upon examination, however, it will be found, that, in all Scotland, there is no congregational Church, whether called Glaſſite, Independent, or Baptiſt, which has ever received into its communion, or retained in it, perſons who were known to be enemies to government, either in principle, or in practice. And wherever churches have been formed in any of the Tabernacles, the ſame rule is obſerved. This is a better teſt of conſcientious ſubjection, than political Addreſſes to the throne. Theſe Addreſſes may indeed be neceſſary to aſcertain the loyalty of men, whoſe obedience is connected with the opinion they entertain of thoſe fluctuating things, men and meaſures; but they are wholly unneceſſary, with regard to thoſe, whoſe obedience is connected with nothing but the unchangeable word of God. From ſuch men, we ſhall never hear of a political Addreſs, and we ſhall never hear of ſeditious practices. Without aſking or expecting any peculiar favour, without thinking themſelves at all entitled to civil privilege as members of a church, they will live quiet and peaceable lives in all godlineſs, and in all honeſty.

If it might not be deemed an inſult to eccleſiaſtical dignity, I would ſend Mr. R. for inſtruction on theſe points, to the ſermon of a very reſpectable man, and I believe a very worthy paſtor of a Baptiſt church in Edinburgh, although, in Mr. R's eſtimation, nothing more than a Lay-Preacher, who has the audacity, not only to

pour forth, but ſometimes even to print, and publiſh his "*looſe harangues.*" The title of this ſermon is, "Loyal-"ty enforced by Arguments which are founded upon juſt "views of Civil Government, as an ordinance of God, "and eſſential to the happineſs of mankind, to which is "added, a Vindication of ſome Diſſenting Congregations, "who have been charged with Diſloyalty by the late Ge-"neral Aſſembly of the Church of Scotland; by William "Braidwood." This ſermon I am willing to ſubmit to the public, as a ſpecimen of Lay-Preaching, and I ſhall not tremble at the iſſue of a fair compariſon, at leaſt as to faithfulneſs, and Scripture knowledge, between it, and the moſt polite, profound, or critical oration on the ſame ſubject that ever proceeded from tongue or pen of Doctor in Divinity. If Mr. R. and his learned friends, are not of the number of thoſe who delight in their ſcorning, and hate knowledge, they will thank me for a peruſal of the following quotation.

"A CHURCH connected with the State, or which "aſpires after that ſort of pre-eminence, may fight againſt "the State. And, not contented with obtaining an ec-"cleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment for themſelves, they may en-"deavour to perſuade the Civil Government to perſecute "thoſe who diſſent from them. The General Aſſembly, "who would have us to believe that every Church is ſe-"ditious except their own, refer to an inſtance exactly "in point, when they boaſt of "THAT CHURCH, *in de-*"*fence of which our fore-fathers fought and bled.*" And "their advice to the people to "RECOLLECT *the counſels* "*and the practice of their fathers,*" ſeems to imply that "*they* alſo ought to fight and bleed in the ſame cauſe. It "may eaſily be recollected, that our fore-fathers fought "not only againſt Popery and Epiſcopacy, but alſo againſt "the Civil Powers, by whom thoſe adverſaries of the Preſ-

" byterian Church were ſucceſſively countenanced and " eſtabliſhed. In modern times, the Church of Scotland " has gradually relaxed, and ſeemed to be diſarmed by " the *Act of Toleration*, and the lenity of our Civil Go- " vernment. She has long permitted the honour of o- " penly maintaining her ancient warlike principles, to " devolve on the diſciples of *Cameron*. But now her " Miniſters appear willing to reſume the ſword, and to " imitate the violent proceedings of their fathers; though, " in other reſpects, many of them do not much reſemble " the Scotch Reformers. Their boldneſs, though hither- " to untried, may perhaps be equal to that of John Knox, " who feared no man. But do they alſo reſemble him in " their knowledge of the Proteſtant doctrine, their warm " attachment to it, and the ſtrictneſs of their religious " character?

" WITH an uncommon degree of earneſtneſs and zeal, " they have intreated the people to adhere to *a fighting* " *Church*; not recollecting that this is one of the moſt " prominent and diſtinguiſhing features of " *Babylon the* " *great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!*" " A FIGHTING PROTESTANT CHURCH AT THE CLOSE OF " THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY!!!——Chriſtianity ſhud- " ders at the thought; and humanity itſelf would drop a " tear, did not all men believe, that the wiſdom and be- " nignity of the Britiſh Parliament will, under God, " prove a ſure defence againſt her hoſtile deſigns, which " are equally impolitic and unchriſtian.

" WHEN General Councils endeavour to awaken the " fanatic zeal of the multitude, *by celebrating the martial* " *atchievements of their anceſtors, in the cauſe of religion*, it " becomes neceſſary to regard them with a jealous eye. " Have any of the Diſſenters dared to publiſh ſentiments

" equally hoſtile to the peace of the country? If they " have, let them be proſecuted by the Civil Power, and " receive the puniſhment which their crime deſerves. But " even in that caſe, the Church of Scotland could not con- " ſiſtently challenge them for adopting principles ſimilar " to her own.

" It is far from being the intention of the author to re- " preſent the national Church, or any other Church in its " collective capacity, as *actually unfriendly* to the preſent " Government. He has only endeavoured to ſhow the " *tendency* of ſome principles, which is not always diſcern- " ed by thoſe who hold them. He even hopes, that the " ſanguinary expreſſions uſed in the Paſtoral Admonition, " which ſeem to threaten the peace of the Diſſenters, are " nothing more than rhetorical ornaments, or the un- " meaning language of perſons who glory in they know " not what. It is difficult, in any other way, to account " for their unanimous aſſent to an abuſive and inflamma- " tory addreſs, which has greatly prejudiſed them in the " eſtimation of all moderate and impartial men, who " have any tolerable underſtanding of the nature of " Chriſt's religion, and of the character of its miniſters.

" It is probable indeed that ſome members, who could " not but diſcern a ſtriking contraſt between their *Admo-* " *nition* and thoſe of the Apoſtles to the firſt Churches, " were over-awed by the fear of ſeeming to give any " countenance to a new claſs of preachers, whoſe exer- " tions had offended the clergy in general. The ſuppreſ- " ſion of lay preachers and catechiſts, being a common " cauſe, was earneſtly and unanimouſly deſired by all " parties; and therefore none of them were over ſcrupu- " lous in adopting meaſures, which they fondly imagined " would have a tendency to accompliſh it.

" The General Aſſembly infer the diſloyalty of all Diſ-
" ſenters merely from their profeſſing certain *religious*
" *principles*, which, although they are admitted to be un-
" friendly to the eſtabliſhed Church, have long ceaſed to
" be viewed in a *criminal* light by many of his Majeſty's
" loyal ſubjects, and by the civil power itſelf. Diſſent-
" ers from the national Church are not connived at; they
" are *Tolerated by act of Parliament**. But no government
" can be ſuppoſed to tolerate that which is in its own
" nature a clear proof of hoſtility againſt the ſtate. On
" the other hand, it is pleaſant to recollect that the prin-
" ciples of eſtabliſhed church-men, the intolerance of
" which, and their diſloyalty *in certain caſes*, have been
" ſo fully evinced by the Paſtoral Admonition, can only
" operate againſt the civil power in circumſtances which
" do not now exiſt. The Church of Scotland has been
" long in the peaceable poſſeſſion of an eccleſiaſtical eſta-
" bliſhment; and at this moment it remains unchallenged
" and unimpaired by any effort of external violence. Other
" parties who may have formerly envied her, are now, it
" is thought, more diſpoſed to allow her to retain her
" birth-right, if ſhe does not attempt to perſecute. But
" let it be obſerved, that this opinion is founded on *their*
" *having forſaken*, in ſome meaſure, thoſe tenets in the
" religious ſyſtem of their fathers, which led them to
" fight for the eſtabliſhment of Preſbytery, and made it
" impoſſible for them to bear a rival, or even to tolerate
" thoſe who differed from them, and who wiſhed to live
" in peace.

" * See an authentic copy of the Speech of William Earl of Mansfield,
" in the Houſe of Lords, Sept. 4. 1767, in the cauſe between the city of
" London and the Diſſenters, publiſhed by his Lordſhip's permiſſion, by
" Philip Furneaux, M. D. in the Appendix to his Letters to Mr. Juſtice
" Blackſtone, concerning his Expoſition of the Act of Toleration. 2d edit.
" London 1771. The Doctor's letters are alſo worthy of the moſt ſerious
" attention."

"SUCH evils have frequently ariſen from confounding "the kingdom of Chriſt with the kingdoms of this world. "And the loyalty of church-men, who feel an intereſt in "ſupporting eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhments, is ſometimes "founded more upon the ſtate of the times, than upon "any ſolid religious principle. But churches formed on "the plan of thoſe "which in Judea were in Chriſt "Jeſus," as they have no wiſh to participate in the ho- "nours or emoluments of the ſtate, nor to employ its "power and influence in propagating their religion, are "in no danger of fighting againſt it. Can it be ſuppoſed, "that any man in his ſenſes will hazard his life in order "to obtain for himſelf and his party, that which he con- "ſiders as a real evil? Or will he uſe violence for the "purpoſe of exterminating falſe religion, while he is deeply "convinced that nothing could more eſſentially injure "the cauſe of true religion? Is it not perfectly clear, that, "before he can follow ſuch practices, he muſt change "his principles, or reſolve to act in direct oppoſition to "them? Let the truth then be fairly admitted, which is, "that the principles maintained in the *Sermon*, and in "this *Vindication*, ſecure the loyalty of thoſe who hold "them; and will never, in any poſſible caſe, excite ſe- "dition againſt the civil powers, how adverſe ſoever they "may be to the authority of eccleſiaſtical rulers, who on "that account are not much diſpoſed to do them juſtice. "They find it eaſier to miſrepreſent, than to refute them.

"FROM theſe hints, and from the ſentiments contained "in the Sermon, the public will judge whether the author "and his religious friends ought to be conſidered as "movers of ſedition." And he has no doubt that all "candid perſons, except political clergymen and their "partizans, will honourably acquit them of this illiberal "and groundleſs charge*."

* Pages 43.—47

To this quotation I ſhall only add, that if Mr. R. chooſe to repeat his dark inſinuations, about political danger, againſt any of the advocates for Lay-Preaching; or againſt myſelf in particular; I ſhall be very much diſpoſed to treat his ſlander with the ſilence of contempt. An endleſs alternation of aſſertion and denial, of libel and not guilty, would be a mere game at ſhuttle-cock, an amuſement for which I have little inclination, and leſs time. I believe, that, in this country, both the rulers, and the public in general, have more ſenſe, than to take *profeſſions*, as a teſt of loyalty, either from Mr. R. or me, or any other perſon. My Bible affords me a plain direction, by which, after all the arts of clergymen to excite ſuſpicion againſt me, I may ſtill dwell in the land, without danger, and without alarm. "Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? do that "which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame*."

The reader will now be able to judge, how far the opinions of the advocates for Lay-Preaching are likely "to "unite with the innovating ſpirit of the age." I am not afraid, however, to meet Mr. R's. inſinuation full in the face. Be it ſo, that "men who thought themſelves wiſe "enough to direct the helm of the nation," ſhould find their way into our communion. Let theſe men be ſuppoſed as bad as it is poſſible. Jeſus Chriſt choſe twelve Apoſtles and one of them was a devil. But if devils ſhall intrude into our churches, they will probably meet with leſs quarter there, than in ſome of the churches from which they came. We do not mean to diſplay our diſcipline, in the partial and ludicrous penances of a *Cutty-Stool*. Following the form of proceſs, preſcribed in the New Teſtament, we ſhall "mark them which cauſe "diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which

* Rom. xiii. 3.

" we have learned; and avoid them*." " We ſhall warn " them that are unruly†." " Them that are ſuch, we " ſhall command, and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, " that with quietneſs they work and eat their own bread‡." " From traitors, having a form of godlineſs, but denying " the power thereof, we ſhall turn away§." " We ſhall " put the brethren in mind to be ſubject to principalities, " and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every " good work‖." " And a man that is an heretick, (or " factious), after the firſt and ſecond admonition, we " ſhall reject; knowing that he that is ſuch, is ſubverted, " and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf¶."

Mr. R.'s attempt to enliſt the " popular claſſes of Diſ- " ſenters," in his ſervice, is extremely diverting. By way, I preſume, of gaining their confidence and friendſhip, he kindly ſuppoſes, that enemies to the ſtate are to be collected only from their communion; as if none of the ſeditious were ever known to belong to the Eſtabliſhed Church. Is not this a hint ſufficiently plain, that the artillery which is now levelled againſt " the New Sect," will ſerve equally well, if occaſion ſhould require it, againſt diſſenting ſects of every kind? Nay, Mr. R. not only inſinuates that the popular diſſenters harbour all the ſeditious at preſent, but thinks they muſt be ſo unwilling to part with thoſe worthy members, as to be provoked to jealouſy by the fear of their being loſt. If I could ſuppoſe, that any claſs of diſſenters could, for a moment, be duped, by ſuch ill-diſguiſed pretences of friendſhip, ſuch awkward attempts at unnatural coalition; that they could be lulled into ſecurity by fair ſpeeches; or ever feel indifferent in any caſe to the perſecution of brethren; I would

* Rom. xvi. 17. † 1 Theſſ. v. 14. ‡ 2 Theſſ. iii. 12.
§ 2 Tim. iii. 4. 5. ‖ Titus iii. 1. ¶ Titus iii. 10. 11

remind them of Mordecai's meſſage to Eſther, "Think not "with thyſelf, that thou ſhalt eſcape in the king's houſe, "more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdeſt "thy peace at this time, then ſhall there enlargement and "deliverance ariſe to the Jews from another place, but "thou and thy father's houſe ſhall be deſtroyed*." There is little occaſion, however, for any admonition of this nature. The Diſſenters, however they may differ in other reſpects, are very generally of one mind, as to the *ſincerity* of thoſe political churchmen, who, pretending friendſhip as their motive, attempt to intermeddle where they have no buſineſs. A reſpectable miniſter in one of the moſt popular claſſes of diſſenters, has recently made to one of Mr. R's. learned friends, a very pointed acknowledgement for ſuch good and faithful ſervices; and Mr. R. will do well to derive from it a uſe of warning†.

In the end of the paragraph Mr. R. affects to ſpeak of "the New Sect in the land," in terms apparently borrowed on purpoſe from the organiſation of ſeditious and treaſonable ſocieties. He ſpeaks of a "Parent Society," which will of itſelf ſuggeſt "affiliated Societies," and both, the idea of political conſpiracy. I am really at a loſs to reconcile ſuch ſtabs in the dark, with any thing like ſimplicity and godly ſincerity. If I underſtand the New Teſtament at all, it was exactly by ſuch accuſations, as are here implied, that the chief prieſts and elders urged on the crucifixion of Jeſus, and afterwards endeavoured to obſtruct the propagation of the goſpel. Mr. R. cannot but know, that ever ſince there was a church upon earth, one church has given riſe to others; churches of the ſame denomination have always had, what they ought

* Eſther iv. 13, 14.

† See Mr. Peddie's Letter to Dr. Porteous, in defence of the Aſſociate Synod, particularly pages 39, 40.

to have, a friendly intercourſe; and ſome of them, ſuch as his own, have adopted very complicated and powerful bonds of connexion, in addition to thoſe of the word of God. The Scriptures celebrate the unity of churches, as edifying and beautiful, and foretell an increaſe of it, as one of the moſt exalted felicities of the latter day. The "New Sect," are ſo well ſatisfied with the dictates of Revelation on this head, that they have not ſeen it neceſſary to have any other bond of union than that divine word, of which they in common profeſs to believe the doctrines, and in common endeavour to obſerve the ordinances, and obey the precepts. This unity, the offspring of love for the truth's ſake, by which Chriſt ſaith, all men ſhall know his diſciples, Mr. R. ſlyly points at, as a ſource of danger, a ground of ſuſpicion.

It ſeems this Parent Society has "authority." That every ſociety ſhould have authority over its own members, and its immediate ſervants, is neceſſary, I apprehend, to its exiſtence as a ſociety. If Mr. R. can ſhew that there is any authority of one ſociety over another ſociety, of a Parent Society over affiliated ones, among thoſe of whom he ſpeaks, he muſt be poſſeſſed of proof upon the ſubject, of the nature of which I have no idea. I know that ſuch authority has never exiſted, and I promiſe to decline it, if it ſhall ever be aſſumed.

But "even where the authority of the Parent Society "does not at all extend, *its opinions* may have their influ- "ence,"—(here is the ambiguity again) "and may there "foſter a ſpirit of faction, detrimental to the peace of eve- "ry Chriſtian ſociety, and dangerous to the beſt intereſts "of theſe lands." My readers muſt be ſhocked with ſuch virulent inferences, without proof, and drawn by hypothetical reaſoning, from premiſes of vague indeter-

minate meaning. Opinions which can have the effects Mr. R. ſpeaks of, muſt be diabolical indeed! What are they? If political, they have been deſcribed above, and the reader may judge betwixt us. If theological, I appeal to all eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, whether High Church opinions, or the contrary, have tended moſt to foſter a ſpirit of faction, to diſturb the peace of Chriſtian ſocieties, and to endanger the beſt intereſts of any country, or of theſe lands in particular.

THERE is yet another paragraph, which I propoſed to examine, of Mr. R.'s performance*. In the beginning of it, he refers, as an authority, to Dr. Jamieſon, whom I cheerfully acknowledge to be a reſpectable writer. I do not agree with him, in opinion, but I have no inclination to meddle in the controverſy between him and Mr. Hill, from whom he has juſt received a reply, and perhaps I might be found to differ, in ſome points, from both parties. I ſhall do Dr. Jamieſon the juſtice, however, to declare, that I think him a very different opponent from Mr. R. The Dr. ſeeks not the aid of calumny. He avows love to the perſon, and even to the labours of his antagoniſt, as far as his conſcience can approve of them; and in the very paragraph to which Mr. R. ſeems particularly to refer, he diſclaims the ſuſpicion, that any of the advocates for Lay-Preaching, have hoſtile deſigns againſt either the church of Chriſt, or the kingdoms of this world. Addreſſing Mr. Hill, he ſays, "I am far "from ſuppoſing, that you, or any of thoſe with whom "you co-operate, wiſh to ſerve the cauſe of Scepticiſm, "or really mean to injure the church of Chriſt. You act, "I am perſuaded, according to your light, although in "this inſtance to me it appears to be darkneſs. As little "can I entertain the idea, that either you, or they have

* See above page 28.

"any deſigns inimical to civil government. I feel no in-
"clination to have recourſe to ſuch weapons, convinced
"that thoſe, which the Holy Scripture ſupplies, are ſuf-
"ficient; whether I have been able to wield them aright,
"or not*." Had Mr. R. ſhewn himſelf capable of ſuch honourable ſentiments, he ſhould, for me at leaſt, have enjoyed all the ſatisfaction of a ſuppoſed victory, over Lay-Preaching, without moleſtation, and without anſwer.

THERE are now, I think, only three aſſertions, with which I ſhall give myſelf, or my readers, any further trouble. The doctrine of Lay-Preaching tends to ſupport a perpetual revolutionary government in the church: it tends to overturn the office of a public teacher: and its advocates *aim* at that very end which infidels have been unable to accompliſh. In replying to the firſt, I repeat that the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, as lately contended for, has been juſtified, only in ſo far as it might not interfere with the diſcipline of any particular church. But ſince Mr. R. attacks it, as peculiarly congenial with Congregational principles, which I doubt not it may be; I aſk, are thoſe principles one whit more revolutionary, than the principles of Preſbytery, Epiſcopacy, or Popery? Is not what is called the Syſtem of Independency, of as definite, uniform, and permanent a nature, as any other ſyſtem of church government whatſoever? Is it not the common complaint againſt Congregational churches, that, inſtead of being given to change, they are too tenacious of their notions reſpecting church order and communion?

As to the alleged tendency of Lay-Preaching to overturn the office of a public teacher; I aſk, when, and where, has it ever done ſo? It will be trifling to repeat

* Page 83. of Dr. Jamieſon's Remarks on Mr. Hill's Journal.

the caſe of Cromwell's army*. The Lay-Preachers in it depended, it ſeems, not upon the warrant and direction of Scripture, but upon a kind of miraculous aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, without any ſtudy or preparation. They violated every church order, for they took poſſeſſion of the country pulpits where they were quartered. In ſhort, they were bold enthuſiaſts, and they introduced all thoſe diſorders, which enthuſiaſm will always tend to introduce, both amongſt Lay, and Clerical Preachers. Church hiſtory will furniſh at leaſt as many examples of enthuſiaſm among the latter as the former; and will ſhew, that when circumſtances favour its growth, it will become ungovernable, in ſpite of every form of church government. The preaching of Cromwell's officers was not a mere example of Lay-Preaching, but of enthuſiaſtic Lay-Preaching; and the circumſtances which chiefly favoured the growth of their enthuſiaſm, were the principles and conduct of the High Church clergy. Had not men of ſenſe been previouſly diſguſted with clerical arrogance, and the multitude ſunk in groſs ignorance through clerical neglect, the enthuſiaſm of Cromwell's laymen would never have met with ſo much indulgence, or been able to produce ſuch deplorable effects. After all, they did not ſucceed in overturning the office of a public teacher: on the contrary, their extravagancies tended to ſhew the importance of that office more clearly than ever. It is remarkable, that though Independents have always been the readieſt to admit of Lay-Preaching, the unfavourable account of the Lay-Preachers in Cromwell's army, is taken from the teſtimony of an Independent againſt them†. Did the Aſſiſtant Miniſter of *Cambuſlang* never hear of enthuſiaſm and diſorder, mingled with the work of God,

* See Dr. Jamieſon's Remarks on Mr. Hill's Journal, page 69.

† Neale, in his Hiſtory of the Puritans. Vol. III. chap. vi and ix.

where there was no Lay-Preaching, under all the orthodox forms of Preſbytery, and in the very church of Scotland, the neighbourhood, and the pariſh, to which he belongs? It would be wrong to argue from ſuch things, againſt the Preſbyterian ſyſtem, or to ſuſtain them as a ſufficient objection againſt that revival of religion, of which they contributed in ſome meaſure to tarniſh the glory. A ſolitary caſe, occurring under remarkable circumſtances, can never decide the merits of a general queſtion. The fact is, that in Congregational churches, and where what is called Lay-Preaching is expreſsly encouraged, the office of paſtors and teachers is conſidered as no leſs eſſential, than it is in any other churches whatever. All the ſilly declamation, therefore, about the loweſt of the people becoming prieſts of the high places, reſtoring the Patriarchal age, promoting Infidelity, and forcing Chriſtianity herſelf at laſt to retire; is a mere running away with the queſtion, if not a poor ſhift to prevent ſimple readers from patiently conſidering the arguments which may be offered, on the other ſide.

But if it is indeed true, that the advocates for Lay-Preaching are *aiming* at that very end, which Infidels have been labouring to accompliſh, all their apologies, however plauſible, deſerve to be ſpurned away with indignation. Had Mr. R. proved this, he might have ſpared every other part of his labour. Having neglected ſo much as to make an attempt at the proof, it was criminal in him to throw out the dreadful accuſation. Let him conſider well what he is *aiming* at himſelf, when he thus preſumes to judge others. With us it is a very ſmall thing that we ſhould be judged of him, or of any man's judgement. But we will not boaſt of our deſigns. He that judgeth us is the Lord. "Search us, O God, and know "our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts. And ſee

" if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way " everlasting." Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

THESE Animadverſions, have been as unpleaſant to me, as they poſſibly can be to any of my readers. I have found them an irkſome interruption, amidſt a preſs of important buſineſs, from which I would not wiſh, for a moment, to turn lightly aſide; and now that they are finiſhed, I am deeply ſenſible, that Mr. R. and myſelf might have been much more uſefully employed, in the proper labours of our Lord's vineyard, where ſurely there is ſtill room for us both. I felt myſelf called to come forward, as a work of neceſſity, in vindication of the character of my immediate Chriſtian connections, as well as of my own, againſt an attack of the moſt ſerious and dangerous nature, which was equally unwarrantable and unexpected.

WHILE I repel charges which are falſe, I am far from pretending, that either my friends or myſelf ſhould be juſtified in every thing. " If we ſay that we have no ſin, " we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us." I am conſcious of many faults, which it is my duty to confeſs to my fellow creatures. " How much leſs ſhall I anſwer " him, and chooſe out my words to reaſon with him, " whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not an- " ſwer, but I would make ſupplication to my Judge."

IN imitation of Mr. R. I give notice before-hand, that every anonymous reply will by me be diſregarded. I mention this the rather, becauſe the moſt unprincipled attacks have lately been made, in this way, both upon the perſonal reputation, and the public conduct of thoſe, with

whom I am in ſome meaſure connected, as well as on myſelf*. If Mr. R. ſhall think proper to return to the charge, let him obſerve the indiſpenſible rules of ordinary juſtice, which require that the burden of proof ſhould lie on the accuſer. Let him ſtate his caſe, with at leaſt intelligible preciſion; let him produce what he ſuppoſes to be evidence in ſupport of it; and, if I find myſelf unable fairly to prove my innocence, I hope I ſhall have the honeſty to plead guilty. But if his allegations ſhall reſemble thoſe in the pamphlet before me; if they be conceived in ambiguous language, couched under oblique hints, founded in hypothetical reaſoning, or in the ſecret whiſpers of an unnamed informer; the public will be ſufficiently ſenſible from what I have written already, that my ſilence is by no means a tacit acknowledgment of their truth.

I AM not conſcious of the ſmalleſt degree of irritation againſt Mr. R. perſonally; but, leſt my heart ſhould deceive me, I deſire, as in the preſence of God, and as I am taught to pray for pardon myſelf, to forgive him for every injury, which I have, or ſuppoſe I have, received at his hands. His High Church principles, I conceive to be foreign from the doctrines of Scripture, repugnant to the ſpirit of the goſpel, and equally inconſiſtent with the peace of the church, and of the world. On theſe accounts, I wiſh to hate them with a perfect hatred. But

* One of the lateſt inſtances of this kind, was a confident aſſertion, in a Magazine which has an extenſive ſale, that the Edinburgh Clerical Review, a contemptible and odious publication, which exiſted only to a ſecond Number, was an engine, employed by the Society for Propagating the Goſpel at Home, to ſap the foundation of the Church of Scotland. The impudence of this charge was the more remarkable, that the Editors of that abortion had been particularly enquired after, and were known, by all concerned in its fate, to be men altogether unconnected with the defamed Society.

Mr. R., like many worthy men, may be ſincere in maintaining them; and, while I am left to the liberty of my own conſcience, I have no right to complain, if, in matters of this kind, others judge differently from myſelf. The cauſe of truth will never be promoted, either by deceit, or by violence. Theological controverſy, however intereſting, will in no caſe juſtify defamation, or any attempt whatever, "to reward evil unto him that was at "peace with us."

WHILE I give Mr. R. credit for ſincerity, I am under the neceſſity of making a marked diſtinction, between his principles, and the manner in which he has endeavoured to recommend them. Of the latter, I have had too much occaſion, in theſe animadverſions, to remark the want of candour, the artifice, and the cruelty. To me, the very title page appears to be formed for deception. The paſſages I have quoted, not to mention many others of a ſimilar deſcription, ſufficiently ſhew, that the book which contained them, deſerved not ſo plauſible a deſignation, as that of "Lay-Preaching indefenſible, "*on Scripture principles.*" It is ſtrongly, but juſtly, obſerved by an eminent miniſter of America: "All hy-"pocriſy is deteſtable; but I know of none ſo deteſtable "as that, which is coolly written, with full premeditation, by a man of talents, aſſuming the character of a "moral and religious inſtructor, a miniſter, a prophet, "of the truth of the infinite God. Truth is a virtue "perfectly defined, mathematically clear, and completely "underſtood by all men of common ſenſe. There can "be no halting between uttering truth and falſehood, "no doubts, no miſtakes; as between piety and enthuſiaſm, frugality and parſimony, generoſity and profuſion. Tranſgreſſion, therefore, is always a known, definite, deliberate villainy. In the ſudden moment of

" ſtrong temptation, in the hour of unguarded attack,
" in the flutter and trepidation of unexpected alarm, the
" beſt man may, perhaps, be ſurpriſed into any ſin; but
" he who can coolly, of ſteady deſign, and with no unu-
" ſual impulſe, utter falſehood, and vend hypocriſy, is
" not far from finiſhed depravity*."

In juſtification of the ſeverity of my cenſure, I plead, not provocation, but duty. There are ſins, which muſt be reproved with a firmneſs, proportioned to their turpitude. The ſins, which I have detected in Mr. Robertſon's pamphlet, appear to me to be of this number; and as they ſeem, in the preſent times, to abound moſt grievouſly, among an order of men, who profeſs better things, and, by their prevalence, to threaten the moſt miſchievous conſequences, both to the temporal and ſpiritual intereſts of mankind; I ſhould have felt myſelf blameable, had I neglected this opportunity, of bearing my decided teſtimony againſt them. Severe reprehenſion, when the caſe requires it, is not only warranted, but enjoined, by an inſpired apoſtle, as a paſtoral duty of a ſalutary nature. " There are many unruly and vain talk-
" ers and deceivers, ſaith Paul, eſpecially they of the cir-
" cumciſion: whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſub-
" vert whole houſes, teaching things which they ought
" not, for filthy lucre's ſake. One of themſelves, even
" a prophet of their own ſaid, the Cretians are always
" liars, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies. This witneſs is true:
" WHEREFORE, REBUKE THEM SHARPLY, THAT THEY
" MAY BE SOUND IN THE FAITH." Titus i. 10,—13.

* Dwight's Sermons on Infidel Philoſophy.

FINIS.

Page 30. line 5. from the bottom, for *require.* read *require.*